竹光侍

His sword must be bamboo!

三

松本大洋
【作】永福一成

BIG SPIRITS COMICS SPECIAL

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TAKEMITSU ZAMURAI

ART BY
MATSUMOTO
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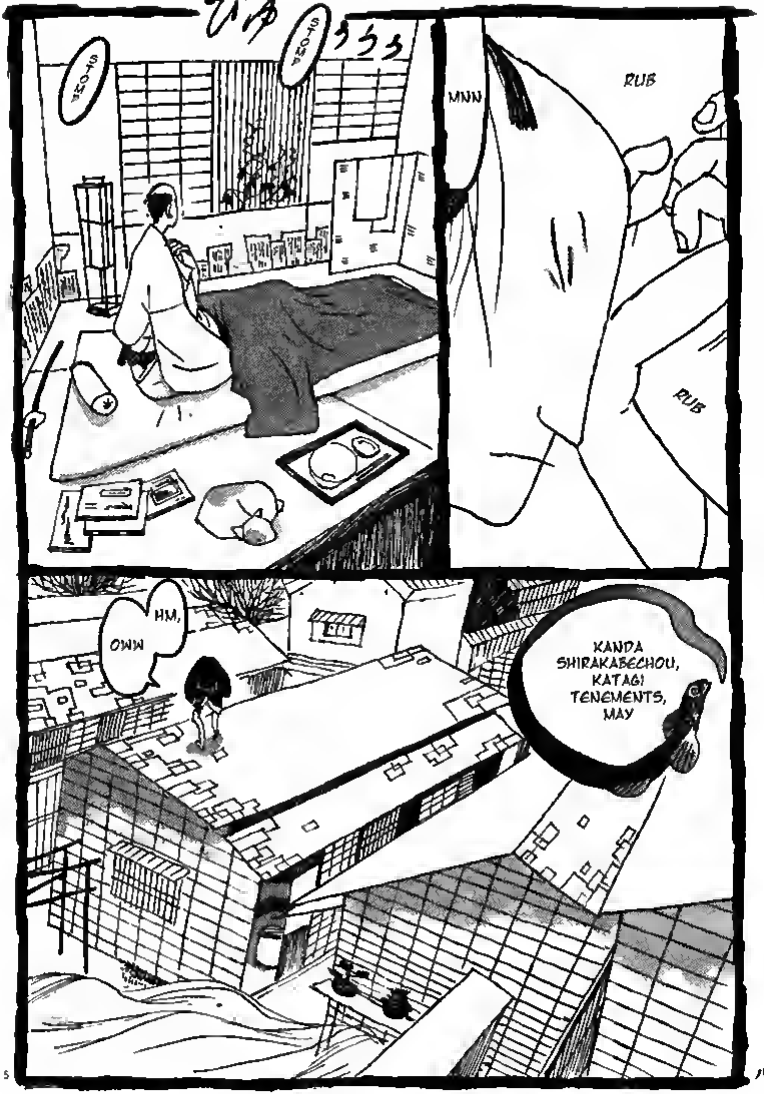
目次

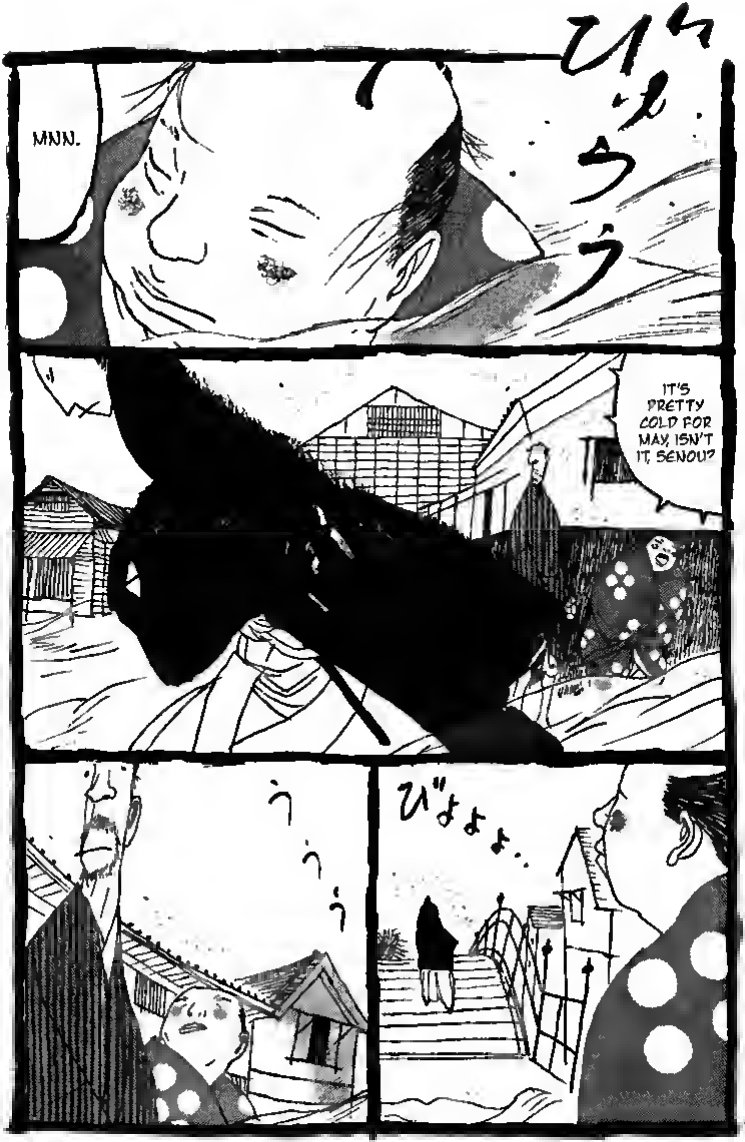
【第二十一話】風　枝を鳴らす——十
【第二十二話】ともだち——二七
【第二十三話】暑い一日——四五
【第二十四話】泰平の世に武士——六一
【第二十五話】鬼が出た——八一
【第二十六話】恒吾郎の死にまつわる諸々——九九
【第二十七話】雨——一一七
【第二十八話】鬼が二匹——一二五
【第二十九話】大山鳴動して鼠がちゅう——一五三
【第三十話】木久地捕縛、その後……——一七二

CHAPTER 21
THE WIND BLOWS THE TREES

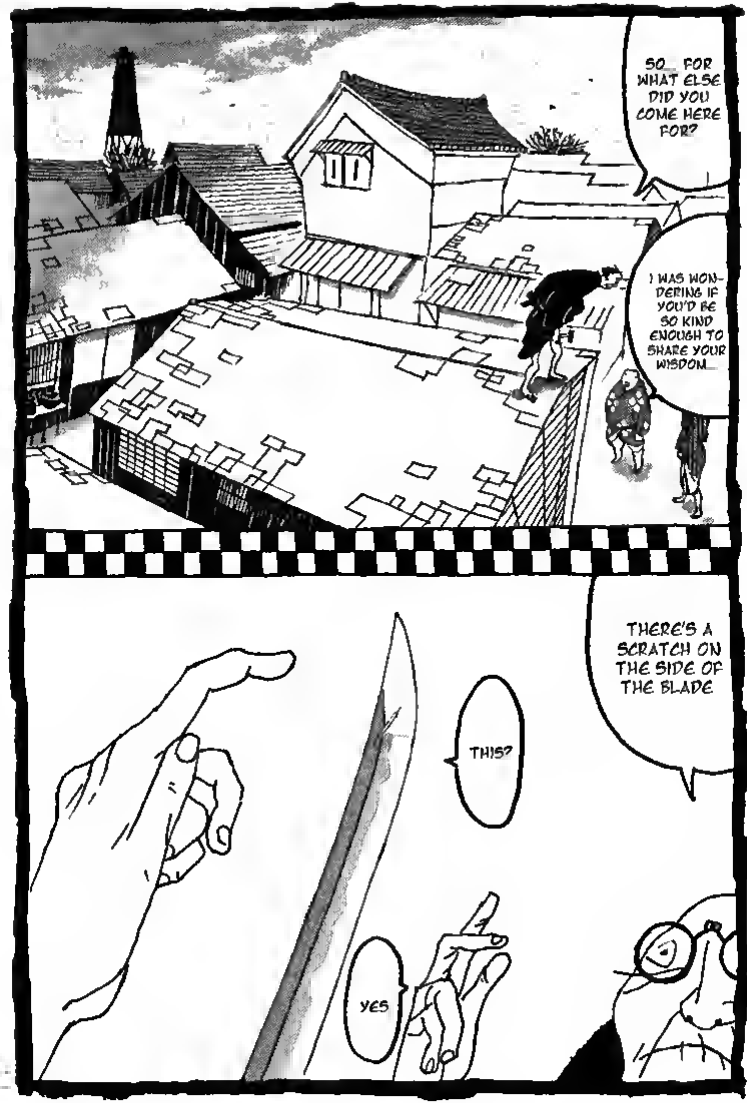
SENOU SOUICHIROU HAD A DREAM. IN IT, HE SAW HIS MOTHER.
YOU ARE POSSESSED BY SOMETHING.
IF YOU HOLD A SWORD, YOU SHALL NOT REMAIN HUMAN.

POINT
YOU WILL WALK ALONG THE SAME PATH AS YOUR FATHER
鬼をし
AND YOU SHALL CEASE TO BE HUMAN IN THIS WORLD
PLEASE BE SURE TO KEEP THIS FACT IN MIND

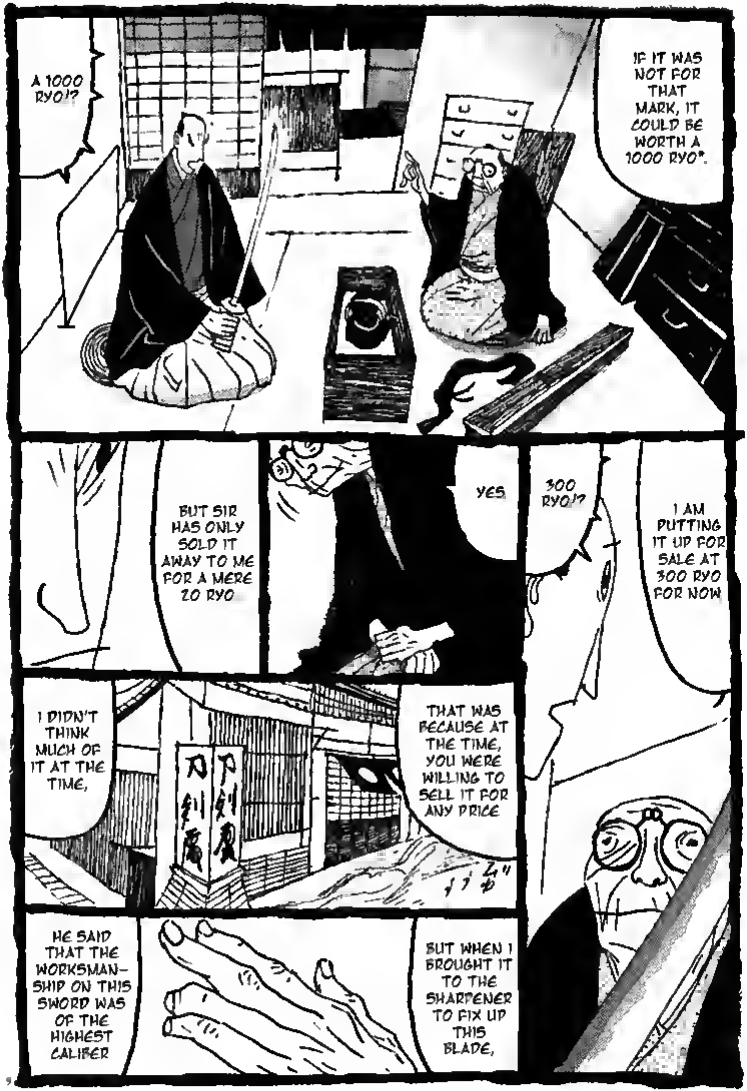

ぴぴぴ
ぴぴぴ
MNN
RUB
RUB
HM,
OWW
KANDA SHIRAKABECHOU, KATAGI TENEMENTS, MAY


MNN.
IT'S PRETTY COLD FOR MAY, ISN'T IT, SENOU?
うう
うう
びょよ..

YES
BAM
BAM
BAM
SENOU?
IT LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING WAS WORRYING HIM.
AGH. THIS IS NO GOOD FOR MY HIP.
HE DOES SEEM TO BE ENGROSSED IN SOMETHING THESE DAYS.
HMM.
SHALL I HELP, BOSS?
STOP BEING STUPID! IF YOU COME UP HERE, THE WHOLE ROOF WILL COME DOWN

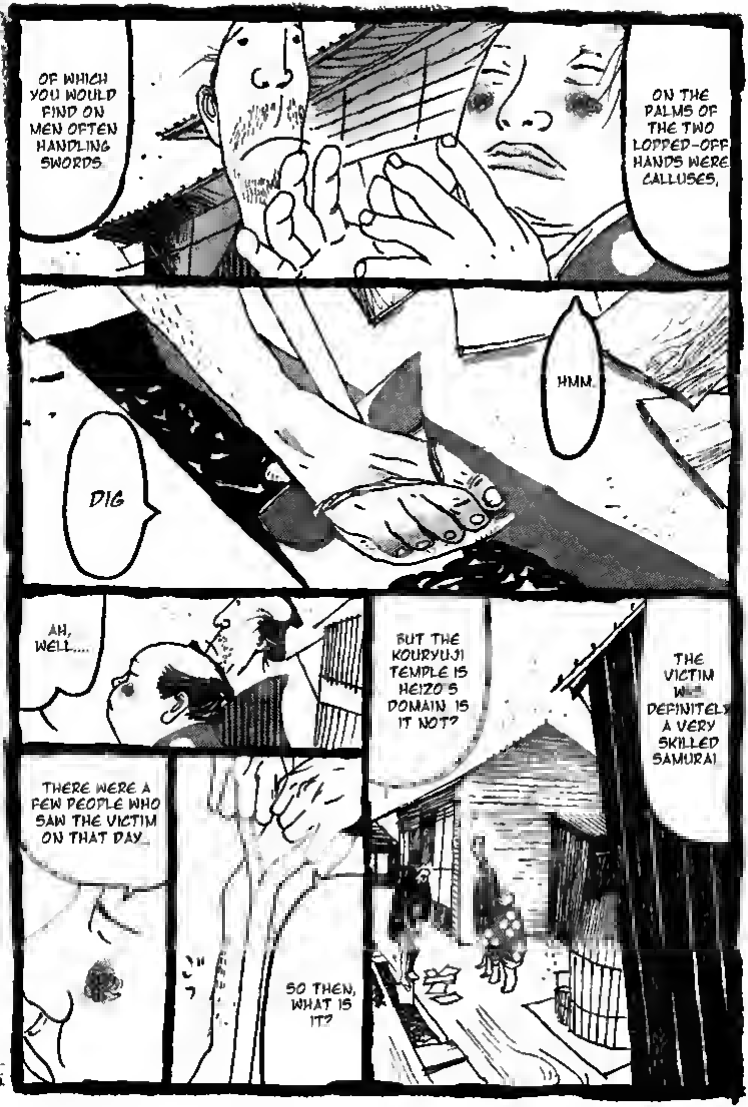

SO... FOR WHAT ELSE DID YOU COME HERE FOR?
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D BE SO KIND ENOUGH TO SHARE YOUR WISDOM...
THERE'S A SCRATCH ON THE SIDE OF THE BLADE
THIS?
YES

*UNIT OF JAPANESE CURRENCY. 1 RYO=1 GOLD PIECE


A 1000 RYO!?
IF IT WAS NOT FOR THAT MARK, IT COULD BE WORTH A 1000 RYO*.
BUT SIR HAS ONLY SOLD IT AWAY TO ME FOR A MERE 20 RYO
YES
300 RYO!?
I AM PUTTING IT UP FOR SALE AT 300 RYO FOR NOW
I DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF IT AT THE TIME,
THAT WAS BECAUSE AT THE TIME, YOU WERE WILLING TO SELL IT FOR ANY PRICE
HE SAID THAT THE WORKSMAN-SHIP ON THIS SWORD WAS OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER
BUT WHEN I BROUGHT IT TO THE SHARPENER TO FIX UP THIS BLADE,

JUST FOR WHAT REASON DID YOU SELL ME THIS SWORD?
IT IS A MEMENTO OF MY FATHER.
IF THAT IS SO, YOU HAVE DONE A VERY FOOLISH THING.
THAT THIS SWORD APPEARS AS IF IT HAD CUT DOWN MANY MANY PEOPLE.
HOWEVER THE SWORD SHARPENER ALSO TOLD ME,

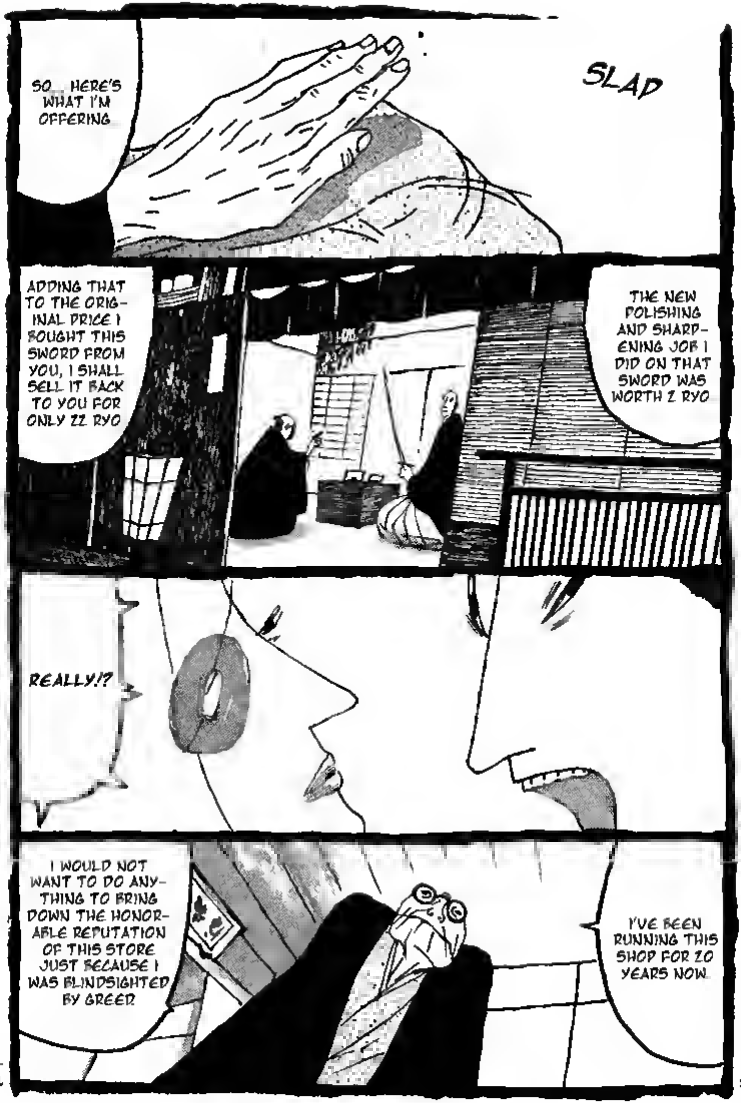
HE SAID IT MIGHT EVEN BE POSSESSED
THERE WAS A MAN FOUND RECENTLY WITH BOTH HIS HANDS AND HEAD CUT OFF NEAR THE KOURYUU TEMPLE.
HIS DEATH WAS DETERMINED TO BE A RESULT OF A DUEL BETWEEN TWO MEN
BUT THE WHOLE MATTER STILL SEEMS VERY OFD

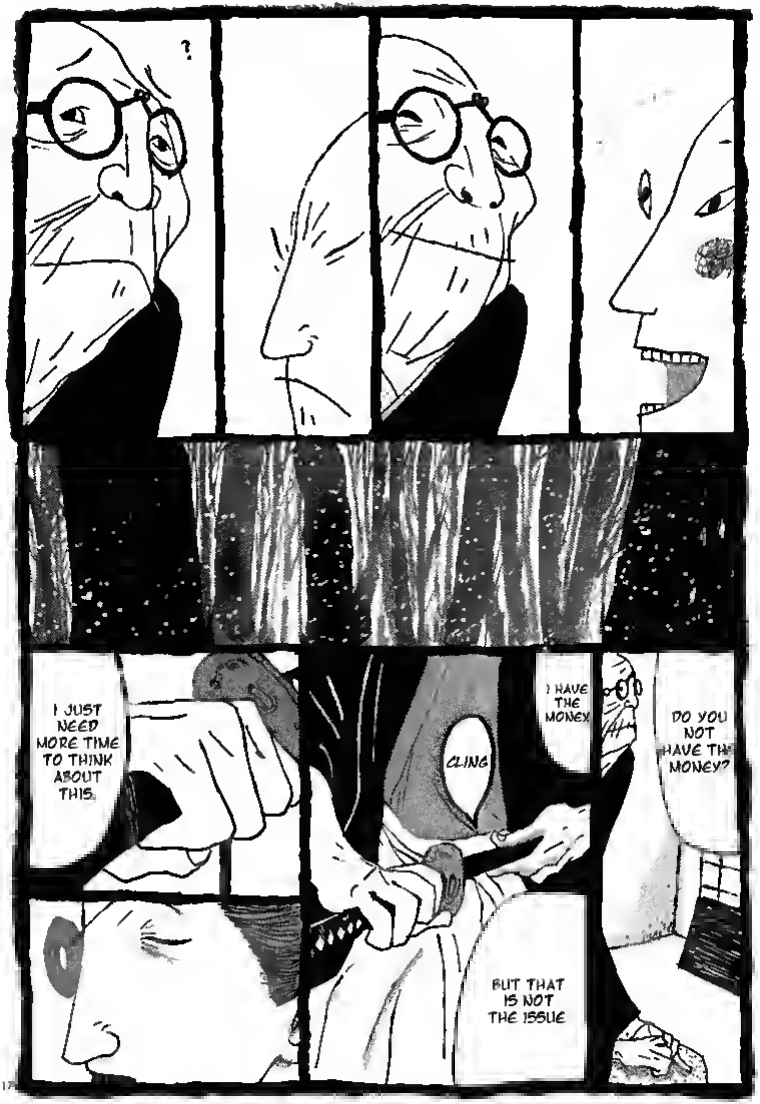

ON THE PALMS OF THE TWO LOPPED-OFF HANDS WERE CALLUSES,
OF WHICH YOU WOULD FIND ON MEN OFTEN HANDLING SWORDS.
HMM.
DIG
THE VICTIM WAS DEFINITELY A VERY SKILLED SAMURAI.
BUT THE KOURYUJI TEMPLE IS HEIZO'S DOMAIN IS IT NOT?
AH, WELL....
SO THEN, WHAT IS IT?
THERE WERE A FEW PEOPLE WHO SAW THE VICTIM ON THAT DAY.

APPARENTLY, HE WAS TAILING SOME MAN...
AND THE MAN HE WAS TAILING...
ACCORDING TO THE EYEWITNESSES, IT WAS A MAN AS HUGE AS A MOUNTAIN.
TOMEKICHI
I'D ASK TOME TO TAKE CARE OF IT, BUT RECENTLY HE'S BEEN BUSY WASTING HIS TIME GAMBLING.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING MORE ABOUT THAT WITH MY SKILLS
SWOOSH
AHH...

AH...
YES...
AH THAT'S RIGHT TSUNE YOU SHOULD GO LECTURE HIM AGAINST GAMBLING AS WELL
HELLO, MR. LANDLORD!
HELLO TO YOU KIDS TOO.
AH, KAN, TELL YOUR FATHER TO COME TALK TO ME WHEN HE RETURNS HOME.
.....
OH, DID YOU KNOW? THIS GUY'S WIFE HAD ANOTHER KID

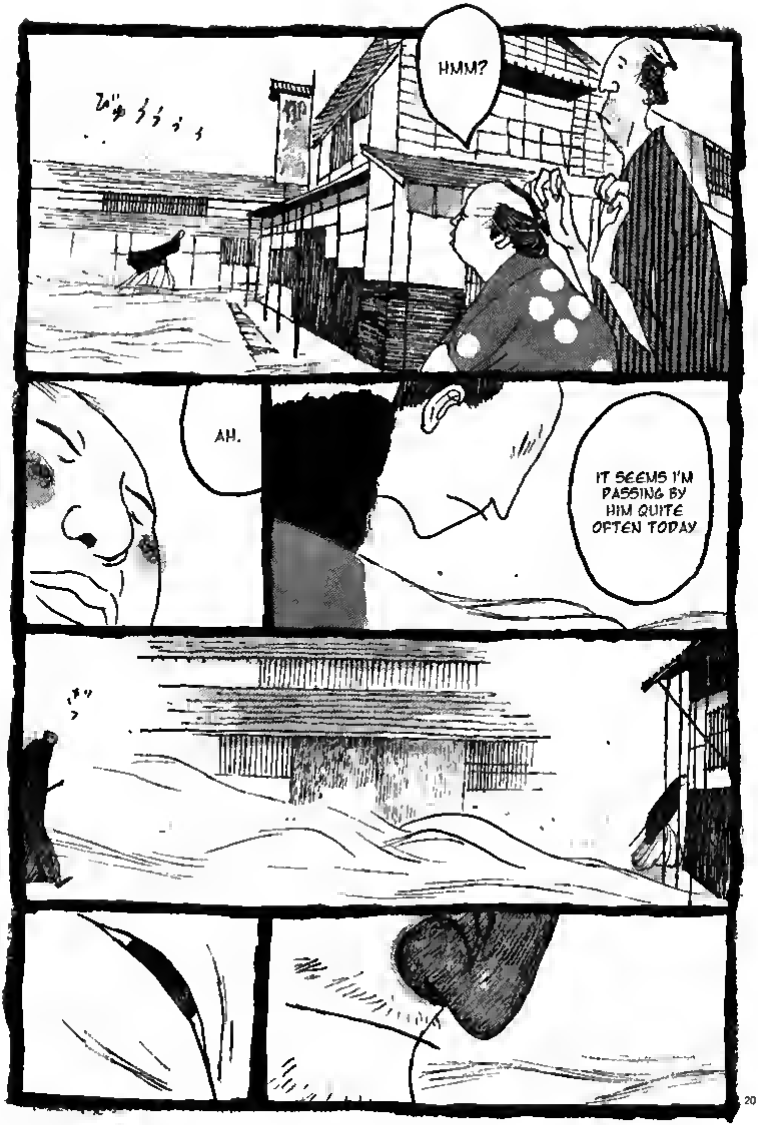
IS THAT TRUE, SADAKICHI? WELL, CONGRATULATIONS
THAT'S YOUR 4TH... OR IS IT YOUR 5TH CHILD?
THE 6TH, ACTUALLY
HA HA HA HA!
OHH...
BUT THE THING IS, BOSS, ALL HIS KIDS HAVE THE SAME OLD HORSE-FACE AS THEIR OLD MAN!
EVER THEIR NEWLY BORN DAUGHTER!
HA HA HA HA HA!
HOW TERRIBLE OF YOU! MY KIDS ARE ALL VERY HANDSOME!
WHY JUST THE OTHER DAY,
ONE OF HIS SONS WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND A SAMURAI MISTOOK HIM FOR A HORSE!
AHAHA HAHA HAHA!!!
WELL IN ANY CASE,
CONGRATULATIONS ON THE NEW KID


SO... HERE'S WHAT I'M OFFERING
SLAD
ADDING THAT TO THE ORIGINAL PRICE I BOUGHT THIS SWORD FROM YOU, I SHALL SELL IT BACK TO YOU FOR ONLY 22 RYO
THE NEW POLISHING AND SHARPENING JOB I DID ON THAT SWORD WAS WORTH 2 RYO
REALLY!?
I WOULD NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO BRING DOWN THE HONORABLE REPUTATION OF THIS STORE JUST BECAUSE I WAS BLINDSIGHTED BY GREED
I'VE BEEN RUNNING THIS SHOP FOR 20 YEARS NOW.


?
DO YOU NOT HAVE THE MONEY?
I HAVE THE MONEY
CLING
BUT THAT IS NOT THE ISSUE
I JUST NEED MORE TIME TO THINK ABOUT THIS.

I MUST DISCUSS IT WITH THE DEMON THAT RESIDES WITHIN ME
PLEASE DECIDE SOON, SIR.
THERE WILL BE OTHER SAMURAIS WHO WOULD BE HIGHLY INTERESTED IN THAT SWORD EVEN AT THE CURRENT ASKING PRICE

SWWOOOSSHH
HM?
HE SURE HAS CHANGED QUITE A BIT.
EVERYONE WHO WORKS IN THIS BUSINESS LONG ENOUGH EVENTUALLY ENDS UP LIKE THAT
MAYBE THAT HOW HUMANS JUST ARE, SADAKICHI?
FLAP
FLAP
THANK YOU SIR
HERE. TAKE THIS. IT MAY NOT BE MUCH BUT THINK OF IT AS A GIFT OF SORTS FOR THE KID
HE'S SUCH A NICE OLD MAN NOW
THAT IT'S ALL JUST A TRANSIENT PHASE, LIKE THE EBBING OF THE TIDES
I THINK A LOT ABOUT IT THESE DAYS TOO,

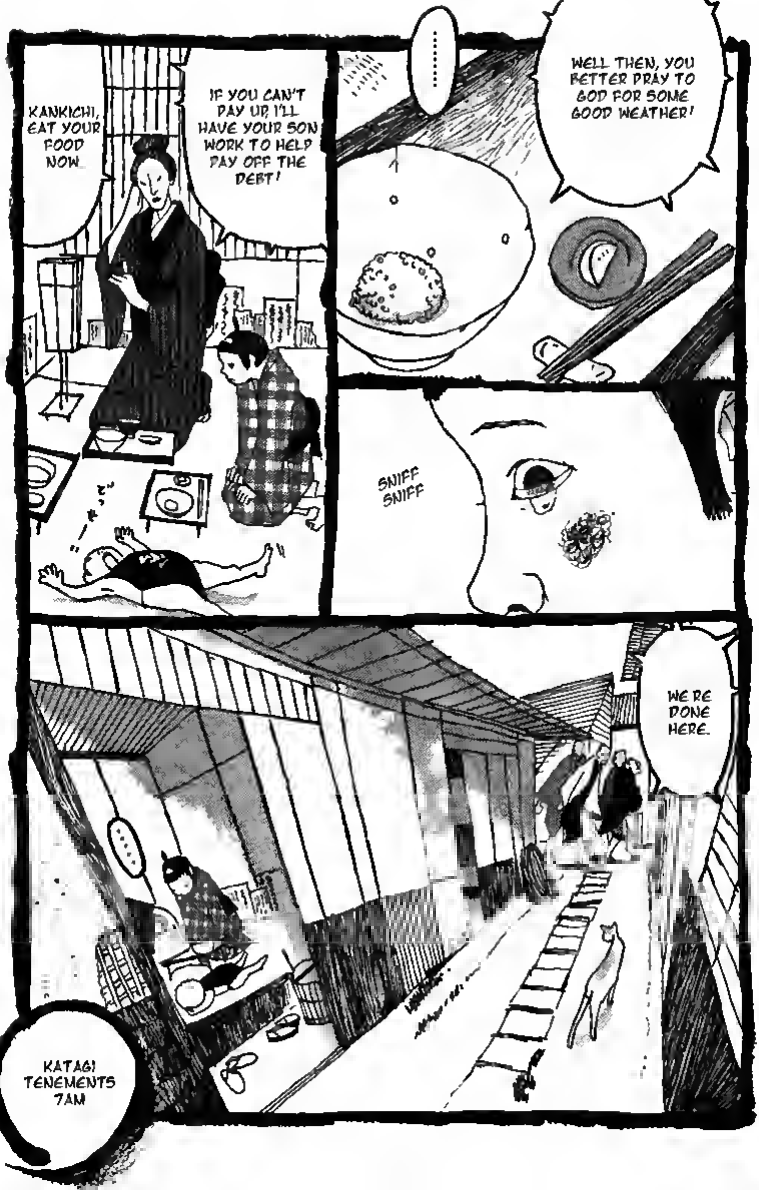

HMM?
AH.
IT SEEMS I'M PASSING BY HIM QUITE OFTEN TODAY

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 22

FRIENDS

KANKICHI'S FATHER, TOMEKICHI, WAS BEING CHASED BY DEBT COLLECTORS AFTER HIS RECENT LOSS IN GAMBLING.
RAIN, RAIN, RAIN, RAIN...
THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY..
IT'S BEEN RAINING NON-STOP RECENTLY.
SO I'M TELLING YOU I'LL DEFINITELY PAY IT BACK BY NEXT MONTH
SHUT UP ABOUT THE RAIN!!
YOU LITTLE BASTARD!
SMACK
GUH...


KANKICHI, EAT YOUR FOOD NOW.
IF YOU CAN'T PAY UP, I'LL HAVE YOUR SON WORK TO HELP PAY OFF THE DEBT!
.....
WELL THEN, YOU BETTER PRAY TO GOD FOR SOME GOOD WEATHER!
SNIFF SNIFF
WE'RE DONE HERE.
KATAGI TENEMENTS 7AM

HIS DAD'S BEING HOUNDED BY DEBT COLLECTORS.
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, DO YA, YOSHIKOU
KAN'S NOT HERE TODAY AGAIN
DIDN'T ALL THE GROWN-UPS HELP HIM THE LAST TIME THEY WERE IN DEBT?
MY MOMMY SAID THAT HE WAS SICK
I THINK HE STAYS BY THE RIVERBED ALL DAY
KAN'S NOT COMING TO CLASS BECAUSE HE FEELS GUILTY
HE JUST PLAYS SKIPPING STONES THERE ALL BY HIMSELF

ALRIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH CHATTING!
OPEN YOUR BOOKS AND WRITE DOWN THE NOTES.
OKAA-AAYYY
AFF
YAHH!
ぴっ

AH!
PRETTY GOOD.
HAH

YOU'RE ALWAYS HERE BY YOURSELF
IS IT FUN?
BUT IF YOU KEEP SKIPPING ROCKS, I CAN'T CATCH ANY FISH
AH...
SORRY
I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO CATCH FISH.
WADE
WADE

AND IS A VERY TALENTED CARPENTER
HE HAS A GOOD ARM,
BUT FOR HIM GAMBLING IS LIKE A WALL THAT HE JUST CAN'T CLIMB OVER
HE TAKES GOOD CARE OF THE YOUNG ONES AS WELL.
IT'S HIS ONLY FLAW
MEOW
MEOW
AND IN THOSE TIMES, THE OTHER TENANTS HELPED HIM OUT.
THIS SAME THING ALREADY HAPPENED SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE YOU ARRIVED.

BUT IT STILL HURTS US ALL TO HEAR THE DEBT COLLECTORS THREATENING TO SELL OFF KAN TO SOME MALE WHOREHOUSE
THEY CAN'T HELP HIM EVERY TIME...
BUT AS THEY SAY, EVEN THE BUDDHA WILL ONLY SHOW HIS GRACE 2 OR 3 TIMES.
IT'S VERY PAINFUL
MEOW

HEE HEE
I'M GOOD, RIGHT?
WADE
WADE
WOOOAAHHH!
BITE
AHH!

NO THANKS
THEIR TUMMIES TASTE GOOD.
RIP
SLAP
WHAT?
IS IT ALRIGHT TO HAVE PARENTS LIKE THAT.
MY PARENTS WERE KILLED BY FISHERMEN.
THEY WERE HANGED FROM THE BRIDGE TO BE MADE AN EXAMPLE OF
THE BRIDGE?

THE FISH AIN'T ALL YOURS!
キェー
"/
AH, A BUG!
SQUISH
FLING
GULP
MUNCH MUNCH

HA HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA

OH NO, IT'S GETTING LATE. I HAVE TO GO HOME.
AH...
WHY CAN'T YOU JUST STAY HERE FOREVER?
WE'LL BE HERE TOGETHER AND CATCH FISH...
AND YOU CAN SKIP ROCKS WHENEVER YOU WANT TOO!
LET'S MAKE THIS PLACE OUR NEW HOME, KAN!
BUT I GOT LOST RECENTLY AND MY PAR...

SO LET'S STAY HERE TOGETHER COME ON, KAN.
TRICKING PEOPLE, CATCHING FISH I'LL TEACH YOU EVERYTHING.
!?

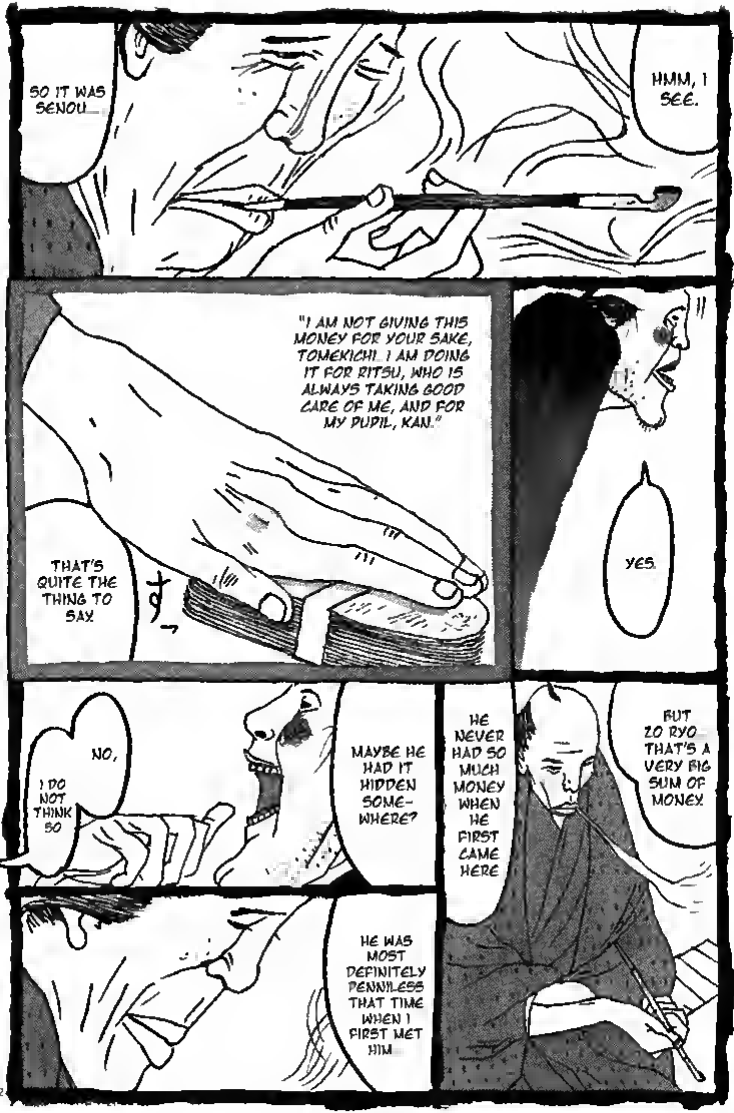
SOU!!
WHO'RE YOU!?

THIS CHILD HAS A PLACE TO RETURN BACK TO
BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE HIM AWAY
THANKS FOR PLAYING WITH KAN AND KEEPING HIM COMPANY.
GYAA!
GYAA!
HMPH. YOU STINK! YOU STINK!
GYAA!
GYAA!
GYAA!
SNIFF
SNIFF

CHEW CHEW
YAHH!
KANKICHI ATE THE DANGO AS IF IT WERE THE MOST DELICIOUS THING IN THE WORLD
AHHH
SPLASH
HE WAS A LITTLE SCARED BY THE SKY TURNING DEEP RED
HMPH.
HE NEVER MET THAT MYSETERIOUS GIRL AGAIN.

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 23
ONE HOT DAY
TOMEKICHI'S DEBT OF 20 RYO WAS CLEARED SUDDENLY ONE DAY. YOZAEMON, WONDERING WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED, WENT TO QUESTION TOMEKICHI.


HMM, I SEE.
SO IT WAS SENOU...
"I AM NOT GIVING THIS MONEY FOR YOUR SAKE, TOMEKICHI. I AM DOING IT FOR RITSU, WHO IS ALWAYS TAKING GOOD CARE OF ME, AND FOR MY PUPIL, KAN."
YES.
THAT'S QUITE THE THING TO SAY
BUT 20 RYO... THAT'S A VERY BIG SUM OF MONEY.
HE NEVER HAD SO MUCH MONEY WHEN HE FIRST CAME HERE
MAYBE HE HAD IT HIDDEN SOME-WHERE?
NO, I DO NOT THINK SO
HE WAS MOST DEFINITELY PENNILESS THAT TIME WHEN I FIRST MET HIM...

WHERE'S YOUR HONOR?
COME ON, STAND UP STRAIGHT.
A LOVER?
YES...
WELL HE DID SAY THAT IT WAS THANKS TO A LOVER THAT HE COULD GET THE MONEY
JUST DO NOT GO AROUND TELLING OTHERS OF THIS.
HE LEFT AFTER SAYING THAT.

MAYBE IT WAS KATSU FROM THE ARCHERY RANGE...? NO, IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN
SPEAKING OF WHICH, THIS IS NO TIME FOR YOU TO JUST SIT BY IDLY LIKE A FOOL, TOME...
ZO RYO IS HUGE YOU CAN'T AFFORT TO FALL INTO SUCH A DEBT LIKE THAT EVER AGAIN
I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED FROM THIS TO NEVER GAMBLE AGAIN...
I SHALL NEVER AGAIN GO TO THE GAMBLING DEN!
HE TOLD ME...

THAT WHEN I WAS BEING HOUNDED BY DEBT COLLECTORS, KAN STAYED AT THE RIVERBED ALL ALONE, SKIPPING ROCKS ALL DAY LONG
I SEE.
THAT IS GOOD TO HEAR
GRIPPING THOSE ROCKS IN FRUSTRATION UNTIL BLOOD OOZED OUT FROM THOSE TINY HANDS OF HIS ... I SWORE TO NEVER AGAIN GAMBLE WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THIS.
IN ANY CASE, I'M SURE SENOU HAD HIS OWN REASONS FOR DOING THIS. JUST DON'T GO AROUND TELLING OTHERS ABOUT THIS
YES, SIR.
I WON'T TELL ANYONE OTHER THAN MY WIFE.
RITSU?
YES.

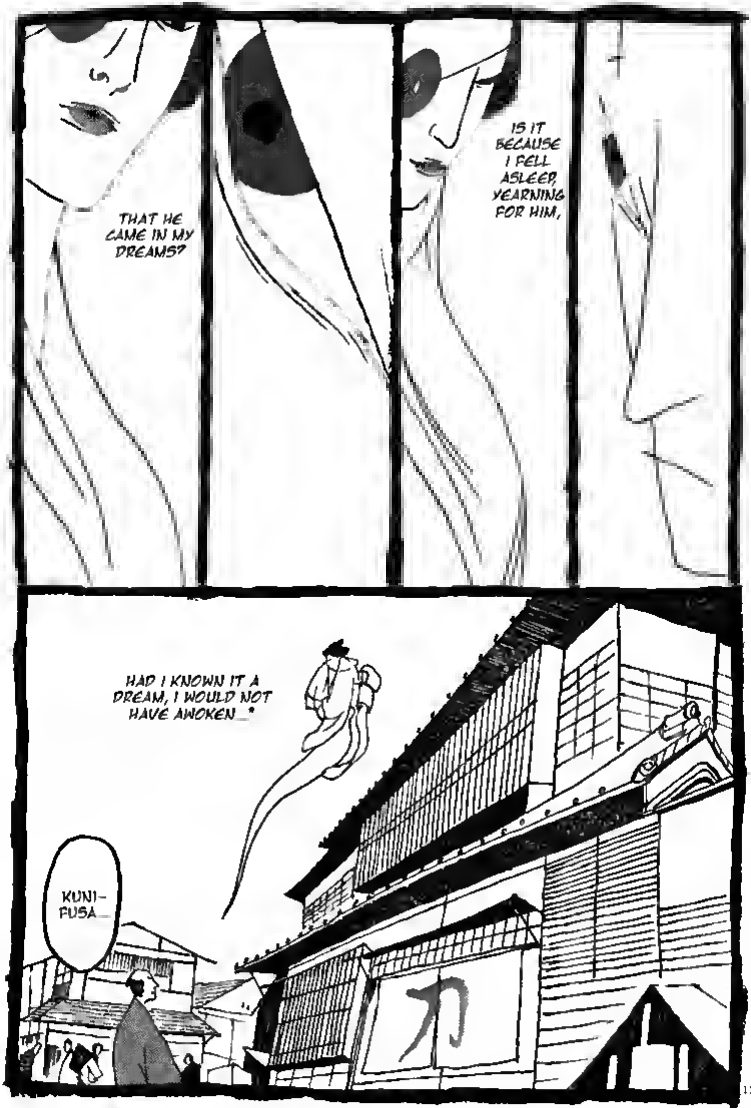
ぱーん
TEACHER!
AGH!!
YES?
WE SHALL FOREVER BE INDEBTED TO YOU...
AH...
WITHIN ONE HOUR, THE ENTIRE NAGAYA TENEMENTS LEARNED WHAT HAPPENED

MEAN-WHILE...
PANT
PANT
PANT
THIS GUY SURE WALKS A LOT. DAMN IT...
PANT

YEAH. HE STAYS THE NIGHT AT SOME SHRINE BUT ALL HIS MEALS ARE EXTRAVAGANT
THIS GUY'S GOT QUITE A FIT O' MONEY, EH, BRO?
TAP
YES.
HE MUST BE GETTING ALL THE MONEY FROM SOME WHERE
WEL-COME, SIR.

BY THE WAY HAVE YOU NOTICED IT YET, SADA-KICHI?
YES THERE'S BEEN A MAN TAILING US SINCE MORNING
NO, I THINK HE'S BEEN WATCHING OVER KIKUCHI JUST LIKE US
YOU HAVE SOME ASARI SOUP?
HE MAY BE TRYING TO PASS OFF AS A VILLAGER BUT HE'S A SAMURAI
YES
DO YOU THINK THAT THE RECENT MURDER WAS DONE BY THIS KIKUCHI?
IT WOULD APPEAR SO.
THAT MAN IS A KILLER FOR SURE.
SAY "AHHH"
AHH

FORGIVE ME, KUNIFUSA. I HAVE BECOME UNABLE TO BUY YOU BACK.
BUT BEING SUCH AN EXCELLENT SWORD, I AM SURE YOU WILL MEET A GOOD MASTER.
YOU NEED NOT COMFORT ME


THAT HE CAME IN MY DREAMS?
IS IT BECAUSE I FELL ASLEEP YEARNING FOR HIM,
HAD I KNOWN IT A DREAM, I WOULD NOT HAVE AWOKEN_*
KUNI-FUSA_

*KUNIFUSA IS QUOTING A FAMOUS WAKA POEM WRITTEN BY ONO NO KOMACHI

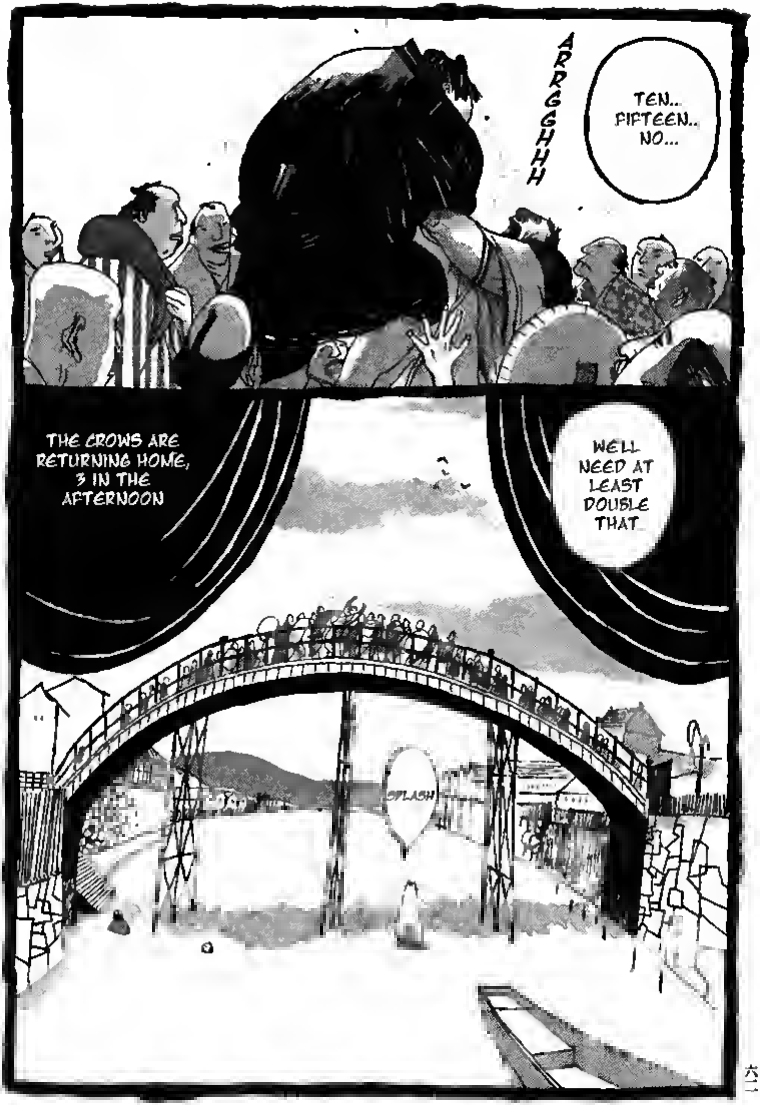
HMPH...
ANNOYING LITTLE FLIES.
HMM!?

WOAHHH!
MOVE IT, YOU KIDS ARE IN THE WAY!
HMM?
ざっ
ひっ…

ARGGHHH!
WOAHH
AHHHH!
AH!
NNNGGHHH!

YOU BAS-TARD !!!!
SPLASH
AH!

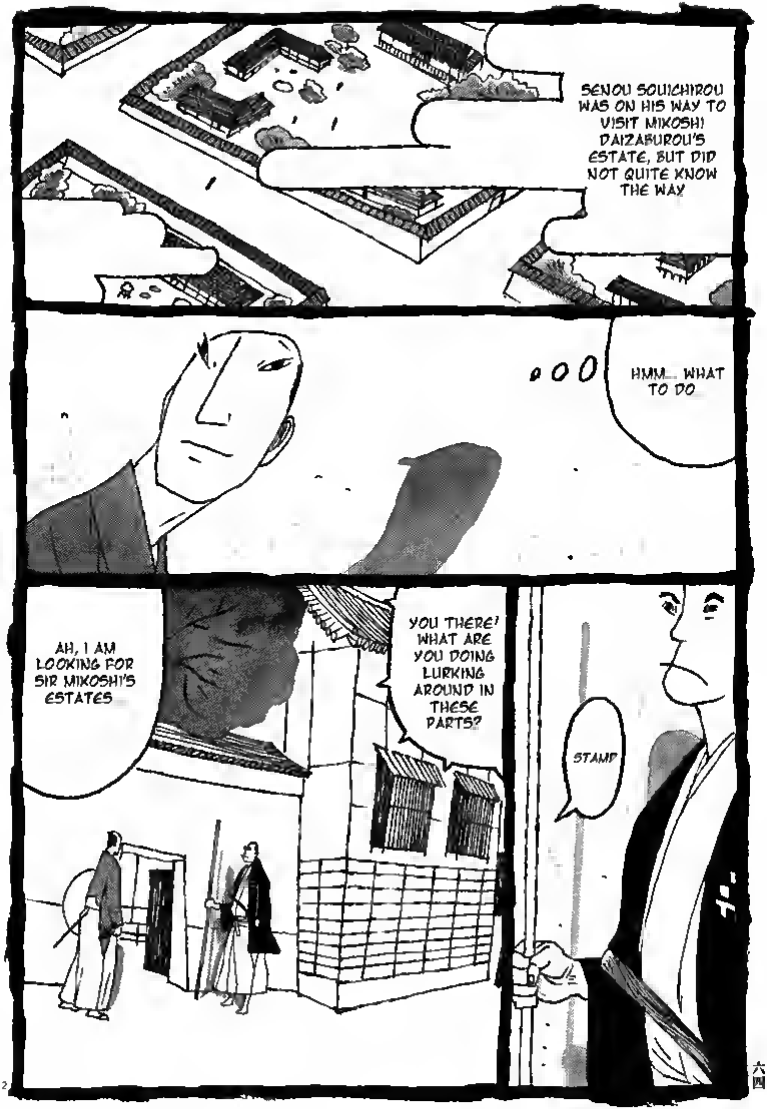
IT'S A FIGHT, A FIGHT!
BETWEEN A RONIN SAMURAI AND SUMO WRESTLERS!
HA HA
CRACK!
UGH!
AGHHHHHH
WOAHHH!
YUP
WE'LL NEED A LOT OF PEOPLE IF WE WANT TO BRING THAT MAN DOWN.
PANT



TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 24

A WARRIOR IN AN AGE OF PEACE


SENOU SOUICHIROU WAS ON HIS WAY TO VISIT MIKOSHI DAIZABUROU'S ESTATE, BUT DID NOT QUITE KNOW THE WAY
HMM... WHAT TO DO
AH, I AM LOOKING FOR SIR MIKOSHI'S ESTATES
YOU THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING LURKING AROUND IN THESE PARTS?
STAMP

WHAT IS IT, MAGO-ROKU?
THERE'S BEEN SOME SUSPICIOUS GUY WALKING AROUND HERE FOR AWHILE NOW
AH! WELL, IF IT ISN'T SOUICH-IROU
YOU KNOW HIM?
AH, HELLO GENJI ! APOLO-GIZE FOR COMING WITHOUT FORE-WORD

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM...
KIKUCHI SHINNOSUKE?
HE HAS BEEN TAILING ME THESE DAYS, LYING IN WAIT FOR A CHANCE TO CUT ME DOWN WHEN I LOWER MY GUARD.
HMM... AND YOU FEAR HIM TAKING YOUR LIFE?
YES.
I SEE.
HMM...
HIS SKILL WITH THE SWORD...
AND HOW SKILLED IS HE?

IT IS AS IF HE WAS BORN FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL
I SHALL,
CUT YOU DOWN ONE DAY
HE IS FILLED WITH MALICE AND EVIL.
HMM...
IN ANY CASE, YOUR BAMBOO BLADE WILL BE AT A DISADVAN
I SHALL LET YOU PICK OUT ANY SWORD YOU LIKE FROM OUR ARMORY
I HAVE DECIDED TO NOT WIELD A SWORD
AS PEOPLE SAY THE SWORD IS ONE'S IDENTITY

IF I WIELD A SWORD AND KILL HIM, THEN I AND MY NATURE WILL HAVE BEEN FORCIBLY MORPHED BY HIM
I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO LIVE THE LIFE I AM LEADING NOW
A DEMON SWORDSMAN,
YOU MIGHT BECOME...
AHHH... 'TIS A PITY THAT YOU AND I WERE BOTH BORN IN THE WRONG TIME...
ちぇ
おおおお

JUST WHOM WERE YOU TAUGHT HOW TO WIELD A SWORD BY?
FROM MY LATE FATHER.
HE MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE THE SWORDS-MAN.
YES.
HE COULD EVEN BRING DOWN A BEAR OVER 9SHAKU IN LENGTH WITH HIS SWORD.
A BEAR? WAS HE A HUNTER?
NO,
HE WAS A SAIMRAI.

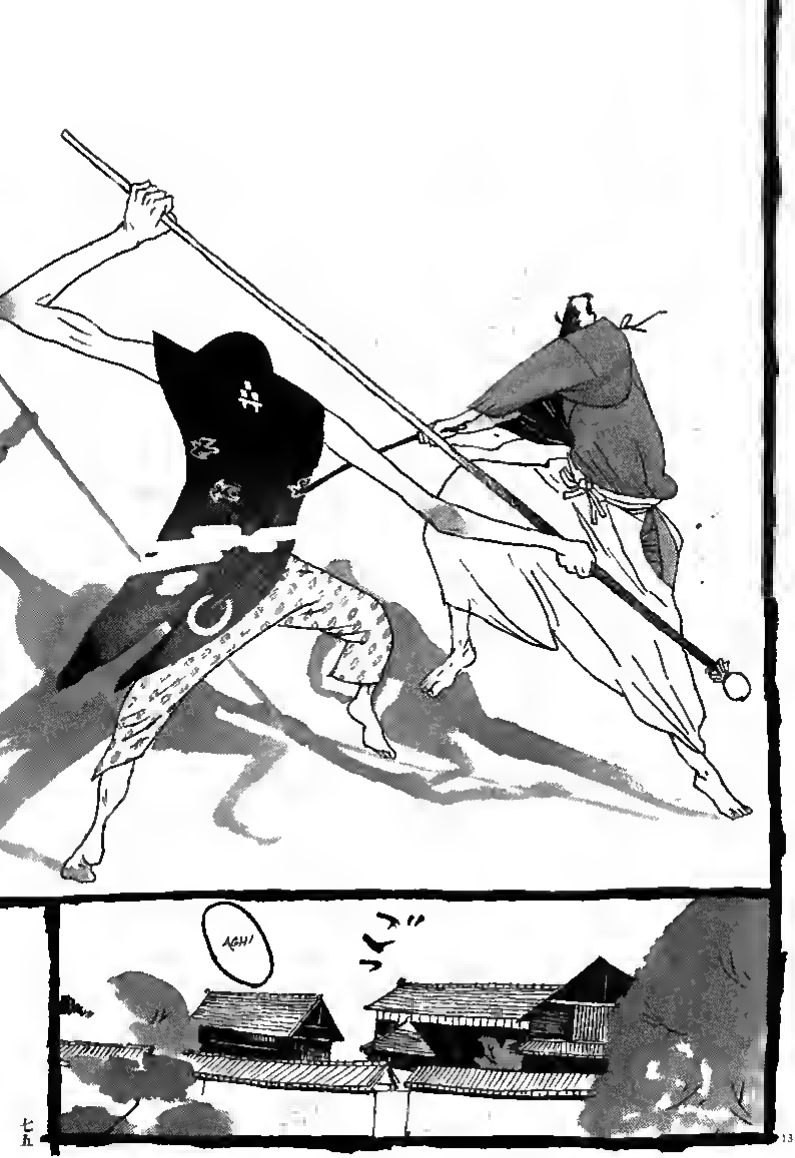
ABOVE ALL HE BELIEVED IN THE MIGHT OF THE SWORD
WIND HOWLING
SWWOSHH!
SWOOSH

!?
I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO MEET HIM.
.....
THEY ARE ALL TAKEN ABACK THAT I HAVE BROUGHT A GUEST OVER
THE PEOPLE OF THIS HOUSEHOLD HOLD ME IN DISDAIN.
TWEET TWEET
WELL THEN, SENOU, WOULD YOU LIKE TO S/AR WITH ME?

AHHH!
GYAAA!
だぁ
んっ
YAHH!
GUH!

A MOST SPLENDID TRAINING HALL YOU HAVE HERE.
YES. IT WAS BUILT BY MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER WHO LOVED THE MARTIAL ARTS
おおお
ガッ
こっ
BUT IT SHALL BE DEMOL-ISHED AS OF THIS SUMMER.
SMACK
BECAUSE THERE IS NO ONE OTHER THAN I WHO USES IT, THERE IS NO USE IN KEEPING IT MAINTAINED.
BAM
IT SEEMS THAT IT MIGHT BE CONVERTED INTO A SCHOOL OF SOME SORT....
WHACK

HAH,
HAH
!
HAH.
HAH.
HAH,
DASH


AGH!

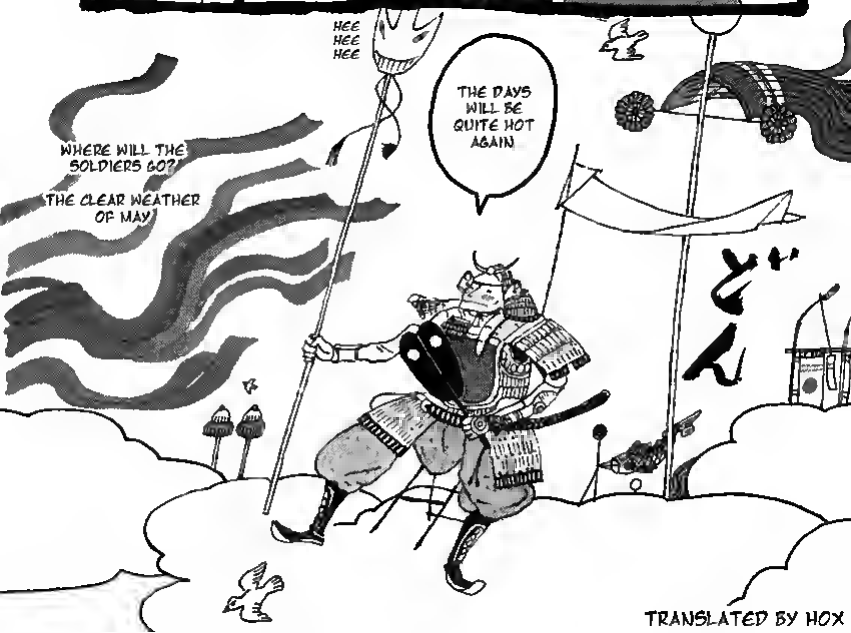
NO... IT WAS MY FAULT FOR FAILING TO DODGE IT...
PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR THAT SWING JUST NOW
NEIGH
BUT YOU ARE INDEED VERY STRONG
I AM AFRAID MY SPEAR IS OF NO MATCH TO YOU
EVEN THOUGH I AM KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, 'DAIZA OF THE SPEAR' AMONG MY FRIENDS I SPAR WITH
GLIS-TERS...
I'VE GROWN DULL...

I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE LIVED AND MET YOU BACK IN THE OLDEN DAYS...
YES.
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TILT YOUR EARS, AND YOU CAN HEAR THE RUMBLING OF THE CAVALRY TROOPS, THE WARDRUMS BEATING, AND THE SIGNAL FIRES SMOULDERING. THE BATTLE IS BEGINNING.
AMIDST THE BATTLE-CRIES AND THE ARROWS WHIZZING BY I CHARGE IN TO TAKE THE ENEMY GENERAL'S HEAD WITHOUT HESITATION
HA HA HA!

?
AH ! OH NO, I MUST HURRY!
AH!
THUMP THUMP
FOOT STEPS
THUD
だっ
YOU SEEM QUITE SPIRITED TODAY AS WELL DAIZABUROU
FATHER ELDER BROTHER WELCOME BACK HOME
STEP
STEP
STEP

YES, ELDER BRO-THER
BUT REFRAIN FROM MAKING SUCH LOUD YELLS, FOR YOU WILL SCARE THE SERVANTS OF THE HOUSE
STEP
STEP
STEP
STEP

HMM... LIKE A COUPLE OF PEOPLE PLAYING DEAD IN FRONT OF A BEAR...
WAHAHA! THAT SENT A SHIVER DOWN MY SPINE FOR A SECOND, HAHA!
THE WINDS ARE TURNING VERY SUMMER-LIKE
YES.



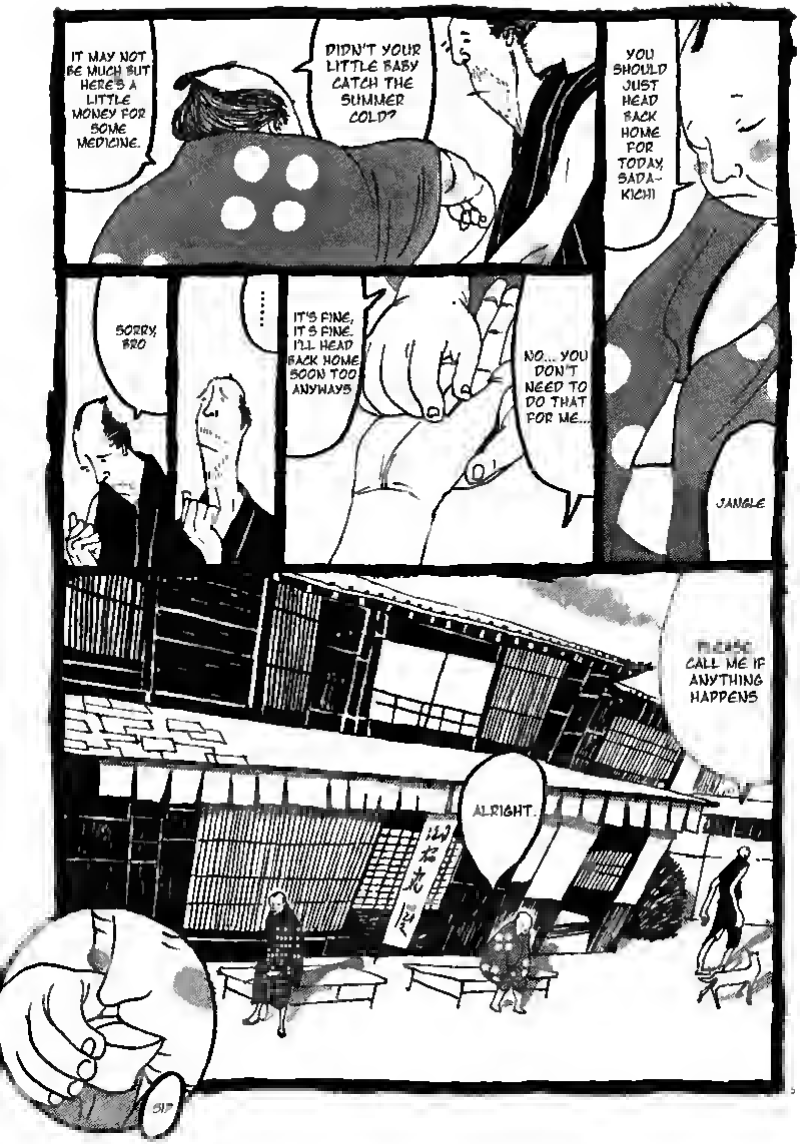
TRANSLATED BY HOX

GRANDMA?
WHAT IS IT?
I JUST THOUGHT I SAW MY GRANDMA OVER THERE...
DOES SHE LIVE AROUND HERE?
NO...
SHE PASSED AWAY 5 YEARS AGO
YOU MUST HAVE MISTAKEN SOMEONE ELSE FOR HER THEN...
YES, I MUST HAVE...

CHAPTER 25
THE DEMON COMES FORTH

DUSK
IS IT JUST ME OR DOES THE SCRUFF OF YOUR NECK LOOK KIND OF SLIM?
YUP, IT SURE DOES.
HAHA DOES IT REALLY LOOK THAT WAY TO YOU?
HAHA, IT'S LIKE A RICECAKE.
SHUT UP.
LET ME SEE.
IT MUST BE BECAUSE OF ALL THAT WALKING AROUND I'M DOING FROM TAILING AFTER THAT GUY I THINK MY BELLY HAS GOTTEN SMALLER AS WELL

HEY OLD MAN! I NEED SOME MORE SAKE!
YES SIR
酒
HE ALREADY KNOWS THAT WE'RE TAILING HIM.
YEAH.
BUT HE PRETENDS HE DOESN'T
NOW... IF I WERE YOZAE OF THE WIND, WHAT WOULD I DO...?

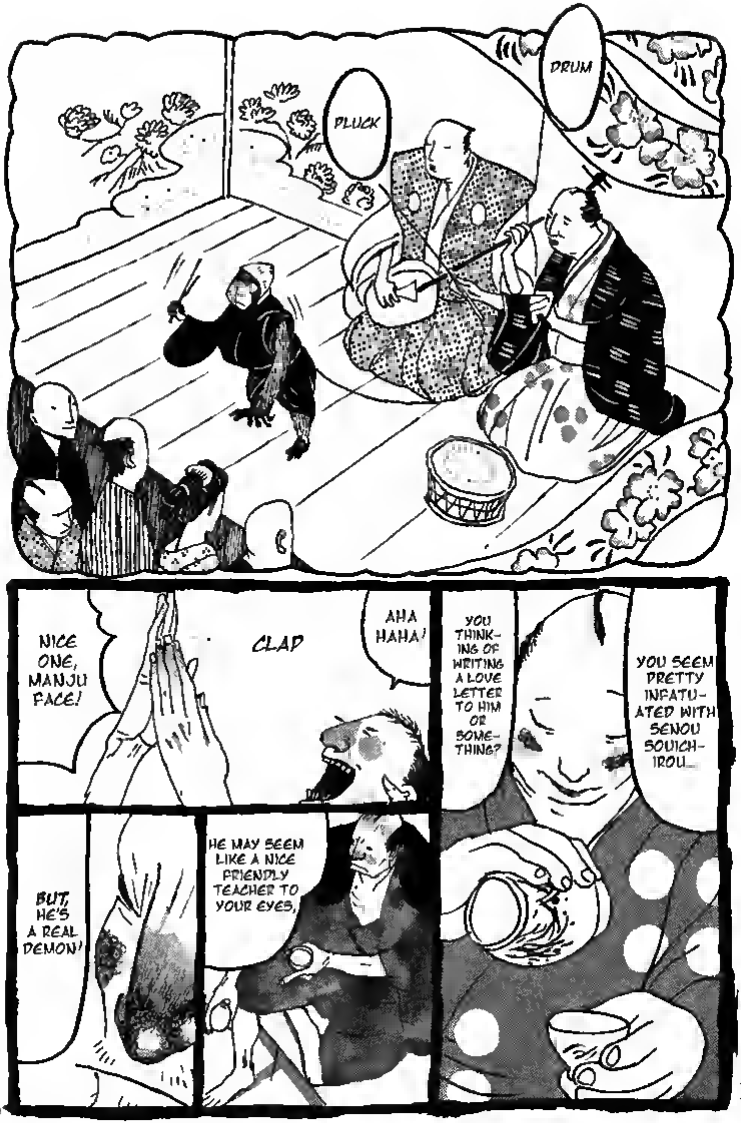

IT MAY NOT BE MUCH BUT HERE'S A LITTLE MONEY FOR SOME MEDICINE.
DIDN'T YOUR LITTLE BABY CATCH THE SUMMER COLD?
YOU SHOULD JUST HEAD BACK HOME FOR TODAY, SADA-KICHI
JANGLE
SORRY, BRO
.....
IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE. I'LL HEAD BACK HOME SOON TOO ANYWAYS.
NO... YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THAT FOR ME...
CALL ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS
ALRIGHT.
SIT

!
HAH...
STEP
HM?
IS IT ALRIGHT IF I TAKE A SEAT HERE, KIKUCHI?

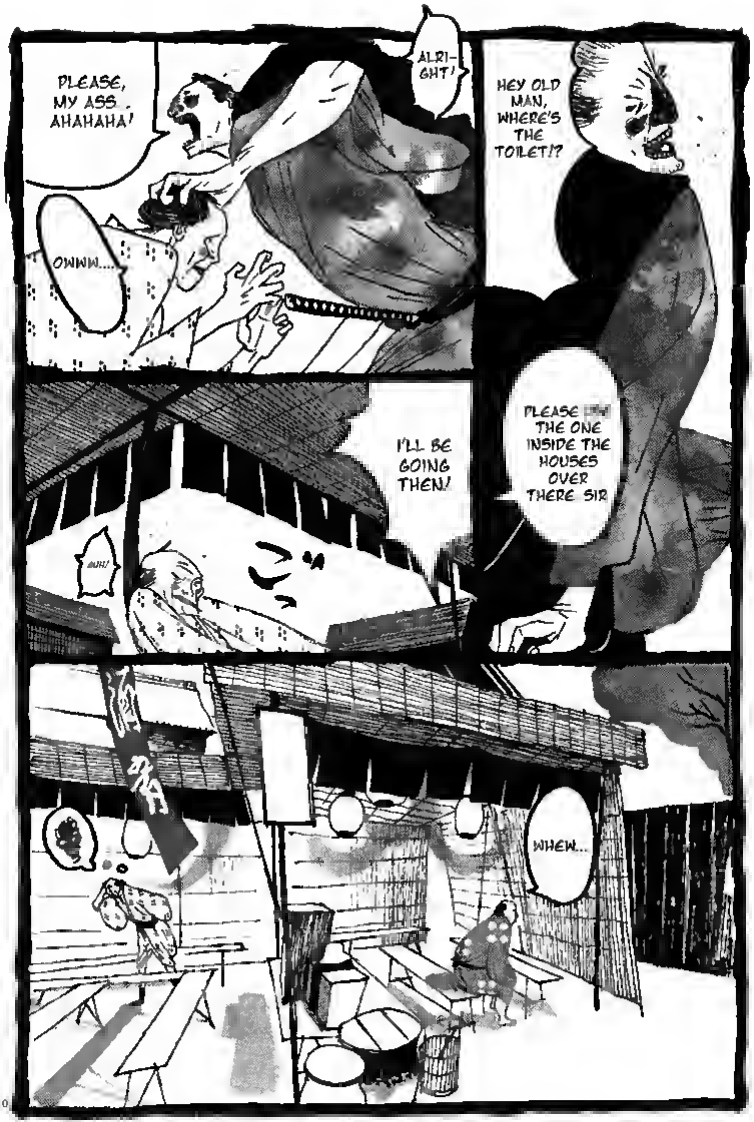
*A TYPE OF JAPANESE CONFECTIONARY

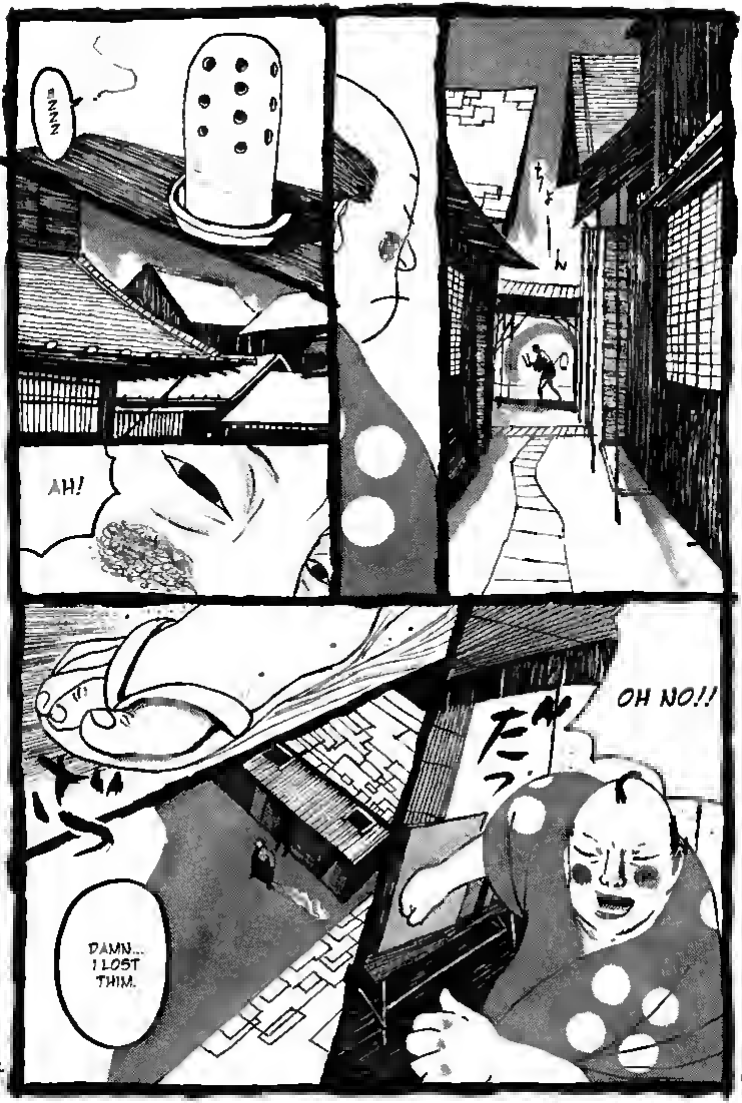
SIR, SOME SAKE OVER HERE.
OF COURSE.
WELL WHATEVER, TAKE A SEAT!
AND WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, YOU MANJU*-FACE!?
I'VE BEEN TAILING YOU FOR THE PAST 2, 3 DAYS.
I'M THE MAN IN CHARGE AROUND HERE. THE NAME'S TSUNEGOROU
.....
I AIN'T GOT NO SUCH THING
HEY SHOW ME YOUR JITTE*!
OH, SO YOU'RE A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, EH?
I SAW ONE RECENTLY YOU KNOW. A MONKEY WAS HOLDING A JITTE!

*TRADITIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT WEAPON OF THE EDO ERA


DRUM
PLUCK
YOU SEEM PRETTY INFATUATED WITH SENOU SOUICHIROU...
YOU THINKING OF WRITING A LOVE LETTER TO HIM OR SOMETHING?
AHA HAHA!
CLAP
NICE ONE, MANJU FACE!
HE MAY SEEM LIKE A NICE FRIENDLY TEACHER TO YOUR EYES,
BUT, HE'S A REAL DEMON!

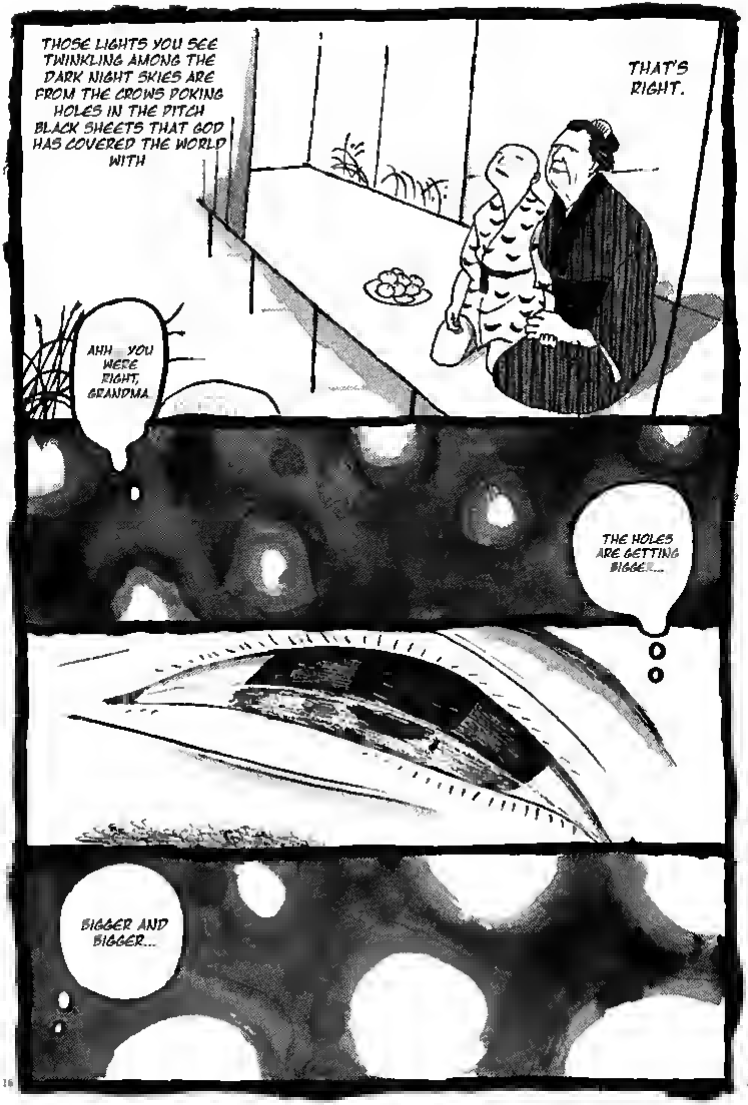
BOTH HIM AND I ARE JUST DEMONS WEARING THE GUISE OF HUMANS.
NO MATTER HOW EVIL A CRIMINAL MIGHT SEEM HE'S JUST A HUMAN IN THE END KIKUCHI.
THERE AIN'T NO DEMONS IN THIS WORLD.
.....
HAH...

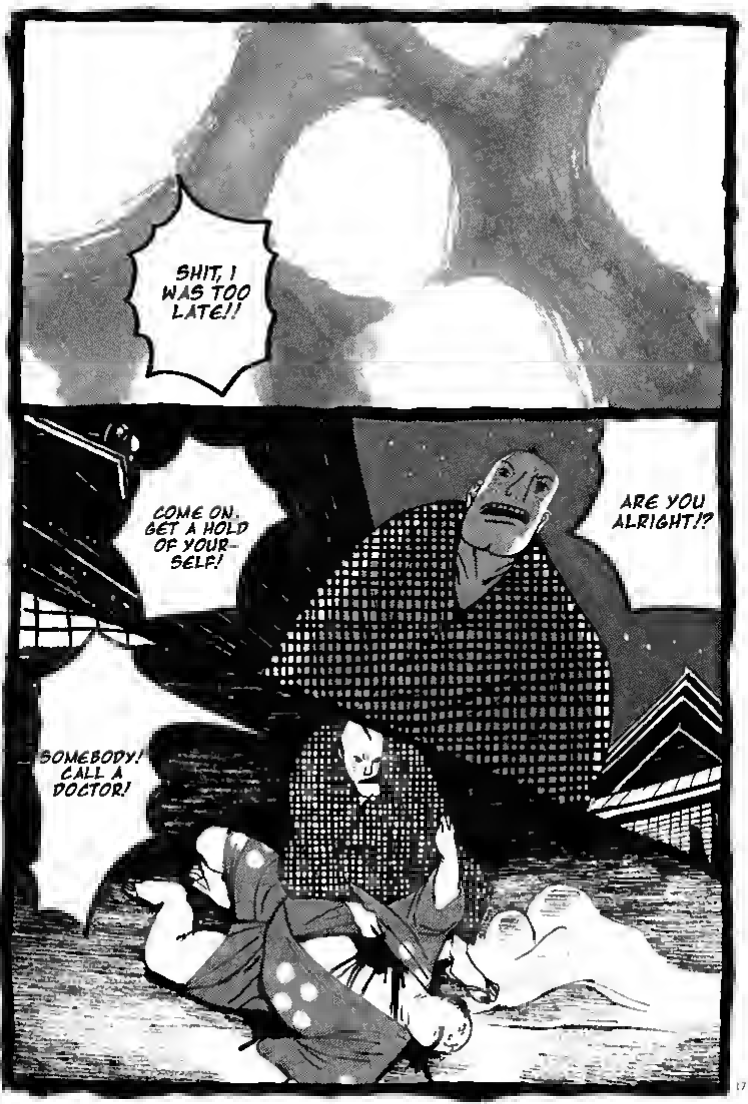

PLEASE, MY ASS. AHAHAHA!
OWWW....
ALRIGHT!
HEY OLD MAN, WHERE'S THE TOILET!?
PLEASE [illegible] THE ONE INSIDE THE HOUSES OVER THERE SIR
I'LL BE GOING THEN!
AHH!
WHEW...

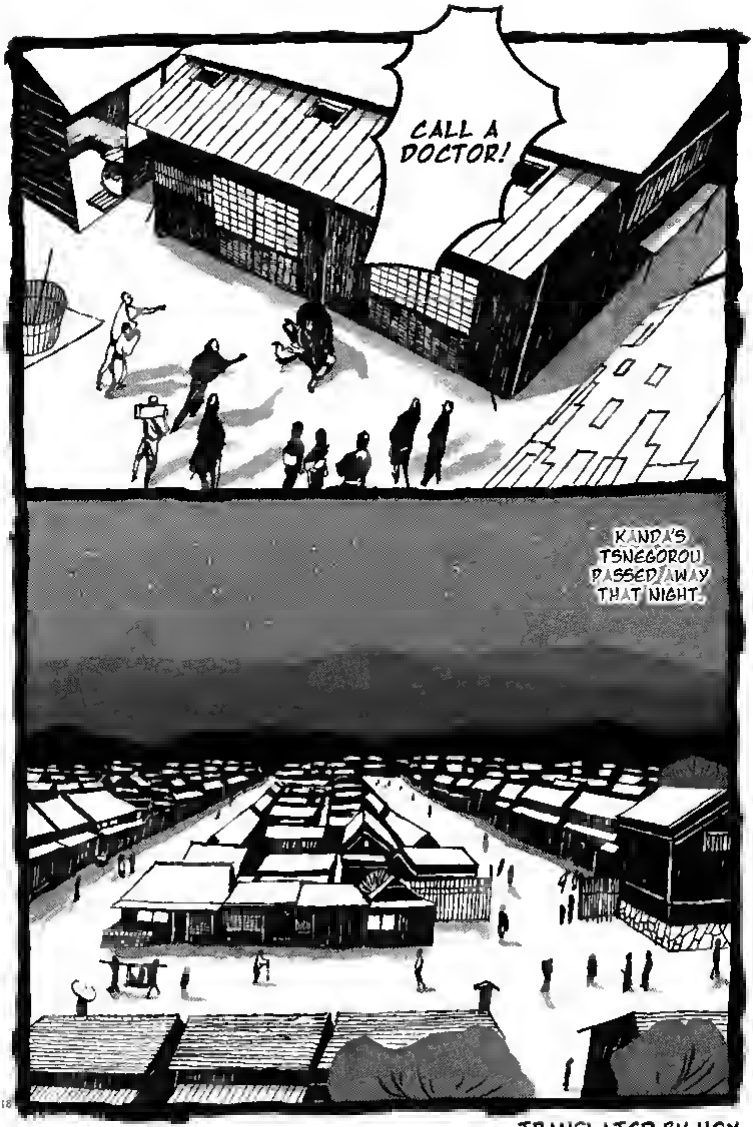

ZZZZ
AH!
ちょーん
OH NO!!
だっ
DAMN... I LOST THIM.

はっ
すぅ
POKE THE MANJU
AND THE RED BEAN PASTE WILL COME OUT
A DEMON...
oo

SLUMP
STEP
THE CROWS POKED THE HOLES?


THOSE LIGHTS YOU SEE TWINKLING AMONG THE DARK NIGHT SKIES ARE FROM THE CROWS POKING HOLES IN THE PITCH BLACK SHEETS THAT GOD HAS COVERED THE WORLD WITH
THAT'S RIGHT.
AHH... YOU WERE RIGHT, GRANDMA
THE HOLES ARE GETTING BIGGE...
BIGGER AND BIGGER...


SHIT, I WAS TOO LATE!!
COME ON, GET A HOLD OF YOUR-SELF!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT!?
SOMEBODY! CALL A DOCTOR!



TRANSLATED BY HOX

TSUNEGOROU'S FUNERAL AND GRAVE WERE PREPARED BY PRIEST HOGA WITHOUT DELAY.
THOUGH TSUNEGOROU HAD NO OTHER RELATIVES BESIDES HIS SISTER, MANY COWORKERS AND FRIENDS ATTENDED HIS FUNERAL.
SOMEWHERE, A CROW WAS CRYING.
A LIGHT DRIZZLE FELL BRIEFLY BUT IT STOPPED SHORTLY AFTER.

CHAPTER 26

THE AFTERMATH OF TSUNEGOROU'S DEATH

JUNE IN EDO

【第二十六話】

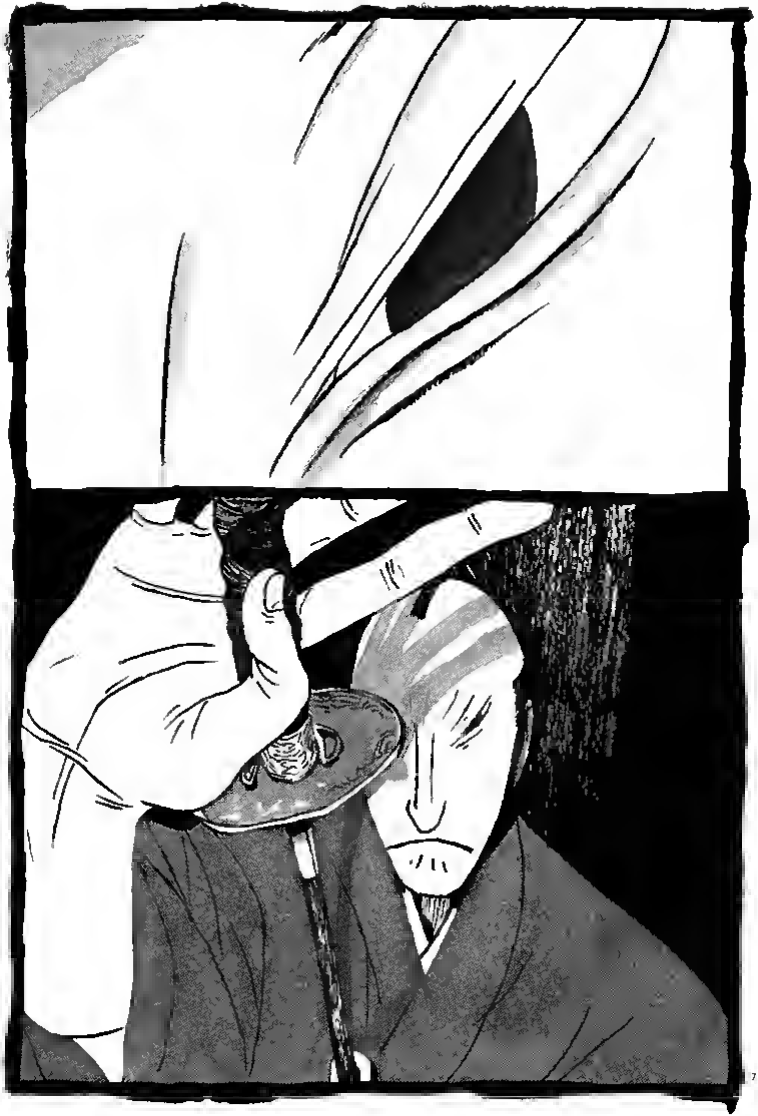
恒吾郎の死にまつわる諸々

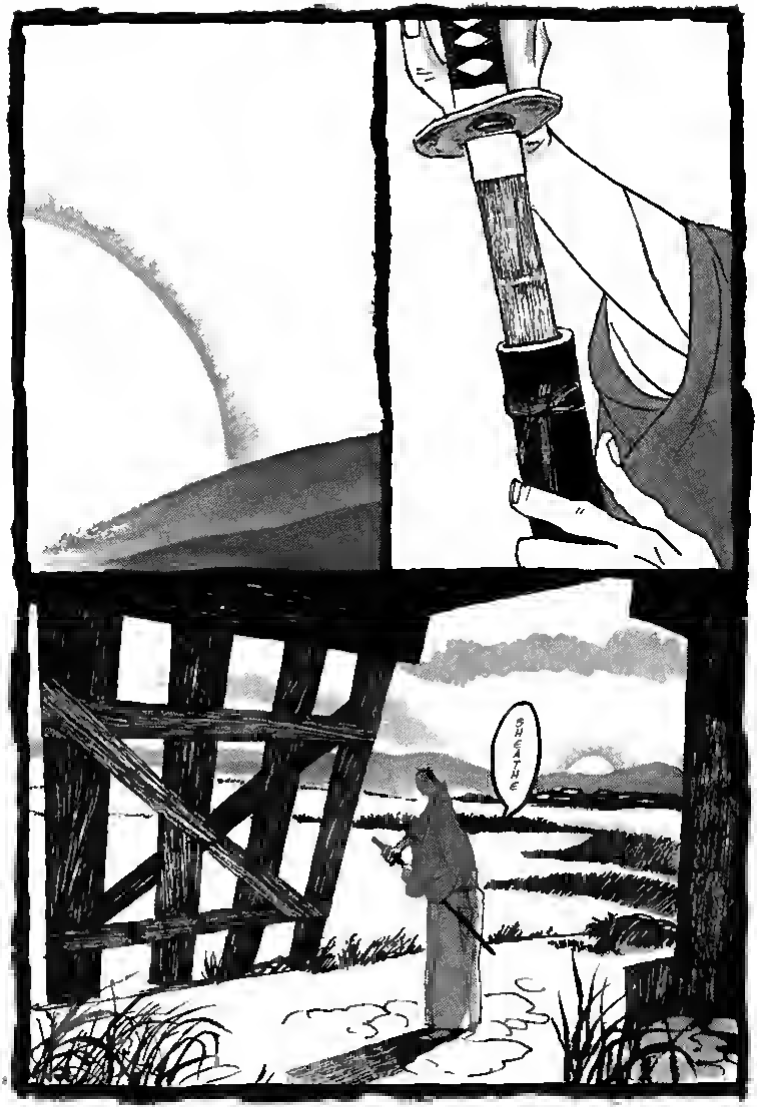
AT YOZAEMON'S HOUSE, THE MEN WHO HAD ATTENDED THE FUNERAL WERE BECOMING AGITATED THE MORE THEY DRANK
I SAY WE CATCH THAT BASTARD AND TEAR HIS GUTS OUT!
THAT'S RIGHT!
IF WE DON'T GET THAT BASTARD KIKUCHI, THEN HOW WOULD WE EVER FACE TSUNEGOROU IN THE AFTERLIFE!
THOSE OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ARE ALL USELESS!
THAT'S RIGHT!
WE CAN'T EVEN TRUST GOD ANYMORE NOW THAT THIS HAS HAPPENED!
MEOW
MEOW
IF WE DON'T ACT, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL SEE US AS NOTHING BUT COWARDS!

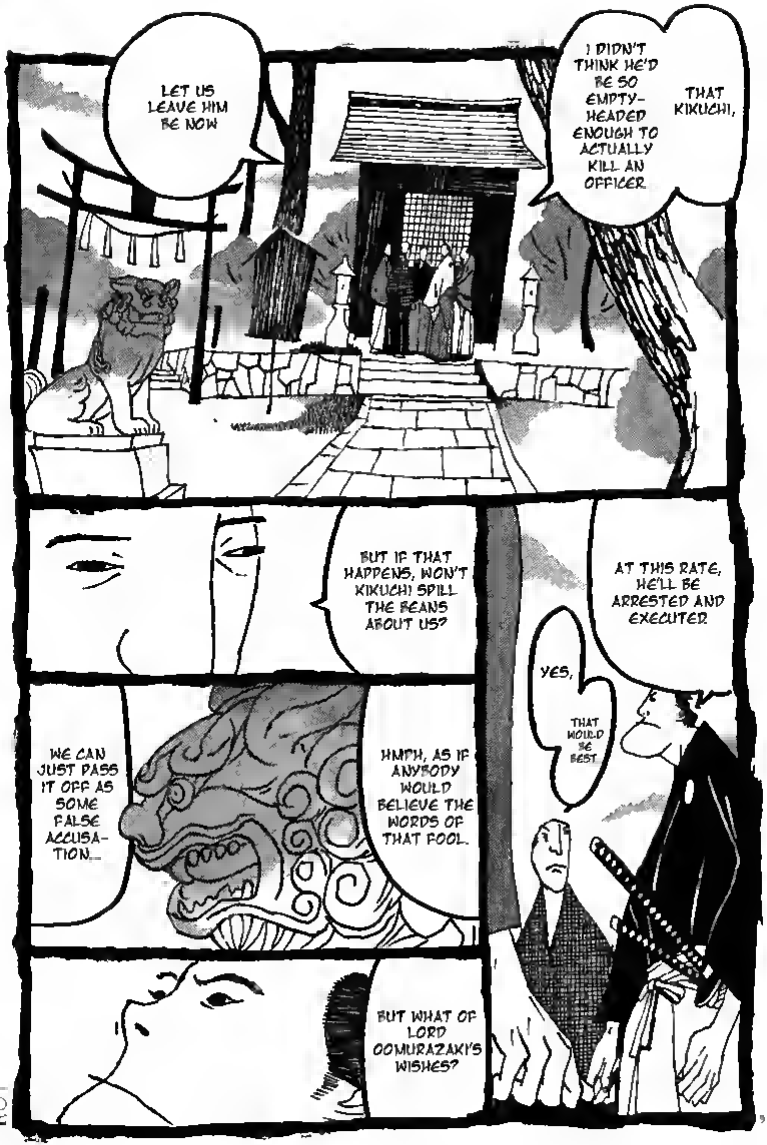
HEAR, HEAR!
A BATTLE TO AVENGE TSUNE'S DEATH!
IF YOU ACT BRASHLY YOU'LL JUST END UP LIKE TSUNE...
ALL THE BLOOD'S GONE RUSHING TO YOUR HEADS AND YOU CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT
SIGH... ALL YOU FOOLS KICKING AND SCREAMING LIKE BABIES...

TSUNE PLAYED HIS CARDS BADLY BY RUSHING THINGS
ACCORDING TO THE SHOPKEEP'S ACCOUNT, TSUNE WAS DRINKING SAKE WITH THE VERY MAN HE WAS TAILING. THAT KIND OF THING... IT'S AN AMATEUR'S MISTAKE.
THEN YOU CAN'T GO RUSHING TO YOUR DEATHS LIKE TSUNE DID
THAT'S JUST THE WAY HIS LINE OF JOB WORKS NOW IF YOU FELLOWS WANT TO DIE PEACEFULLY ON A TATAMI MAT SOMEDAY
YES SIR
IF YOU CAN UNDRSTAND THAT, THEN COOL YOUR HEADS DOWN, YOU FOOLS!

HA HA
HISSSS
MEOW
RRREEOOWWWWW!




BREATHE


LET US LEAVE HIM BE NOW
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE SO EMPTY-HEADED ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY KILL AN OFFICER.
THAT KIKUCHI,
BUT IF THAT HAPPENS, WON'T KIKUCHI SPILL THE BEANS ABOUT US?
AT THIS RATE, HE'LL BE ARRESTED AND EXECUTED.
YES,
THAT WOULD BE BEST.
WE CAN JUST PASS IT OFF AS SOME FALSE ACCUSATION...
HMPH, AS IF ANYBODY WOULD BELIEVE THE WORDS OF THAT FOOL.
BUT WHAT OF LORD OOMURAZAKI'S WISHES?

HIS ORDERS WERE TO LEAVE THE FOX TO KIKUCHI ALONE.
HE IS MUCH MORE SKILLED WITH THE SWORD THAN ANY OF YOU MIGHT IMAGINE.
AHAHAHAHA!
HE IS NOT IN EDO AT THE MOMENT.
SO LET US WRAP THIS UP QUICKLY
IN ANY CASE I DO NOT THINK KIKUCHI WILL REMAIN IN EDO MUCH LONGER.
HE WILL PROBABLY LEAVE HERE SOON.

HA HA HA
IT'S NOTHING SISTER.
OH COME ON WHO IS IT FROM. SHOW ME.
SLIDE

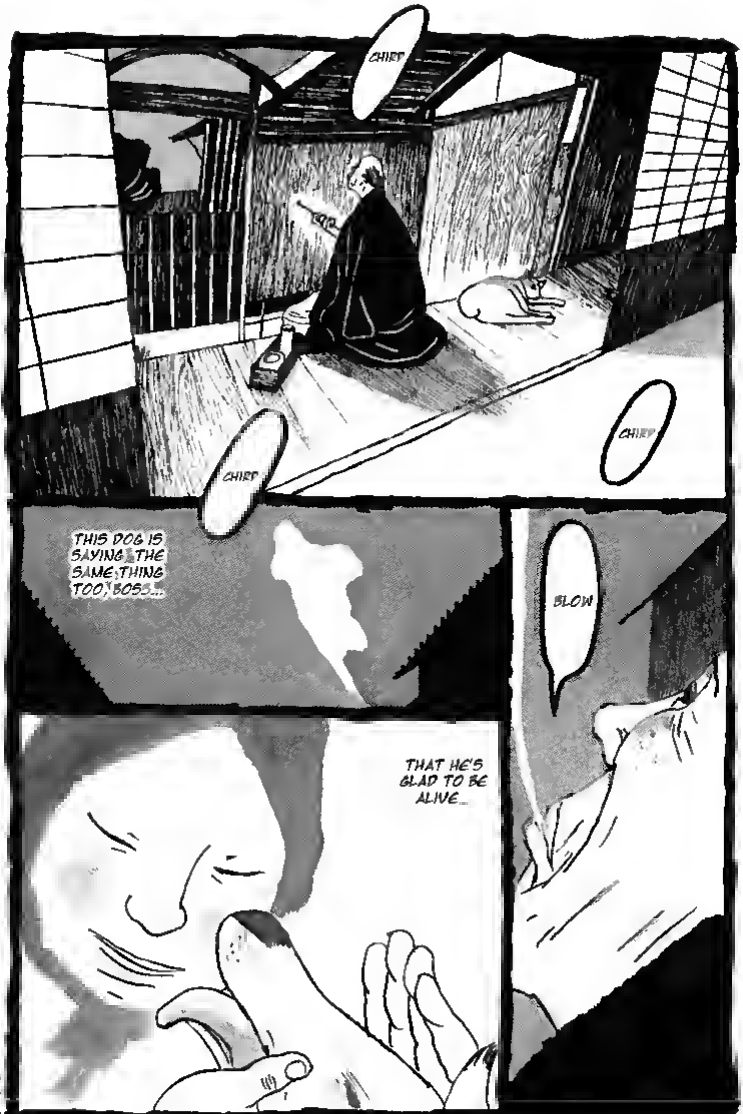
ARE YOU THE ONE CALLED RITSU?
SUSUSU

ざあああ
THEN GO DRINK SOME-WHERE ELSE
COME ON STAY!
AH, COME ON, LET'S DRINK THE NIGHT AWAY!!
ALRIGHT, TIME FOR US TO ALL TAKE OUR LEAVE NOW.

CHIRP
CHIRP
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE.
NO NEED TO THANK ME.
CHIRP
AND THANKS FOR EVERY-THING AS WELL.
YES.
THEN I'LL GO AND ESCORT FUKU BACK TO HER HOME.
I WOULD IMAGINE THINGS WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR YOU FROM NOW ON. SO DON'T HES-ITATE TO ASK FOR HELP FUKU.
CHIRP
THANK YOU.
CHIRP
YOU'VE DONE A WON-DERFUL JOB OF IT...
YOZAE. I KNOW YOU'RE ENDURING A LOT OF PAIN AND SORROW RIGHT NOW AS WELL.
CHIRP

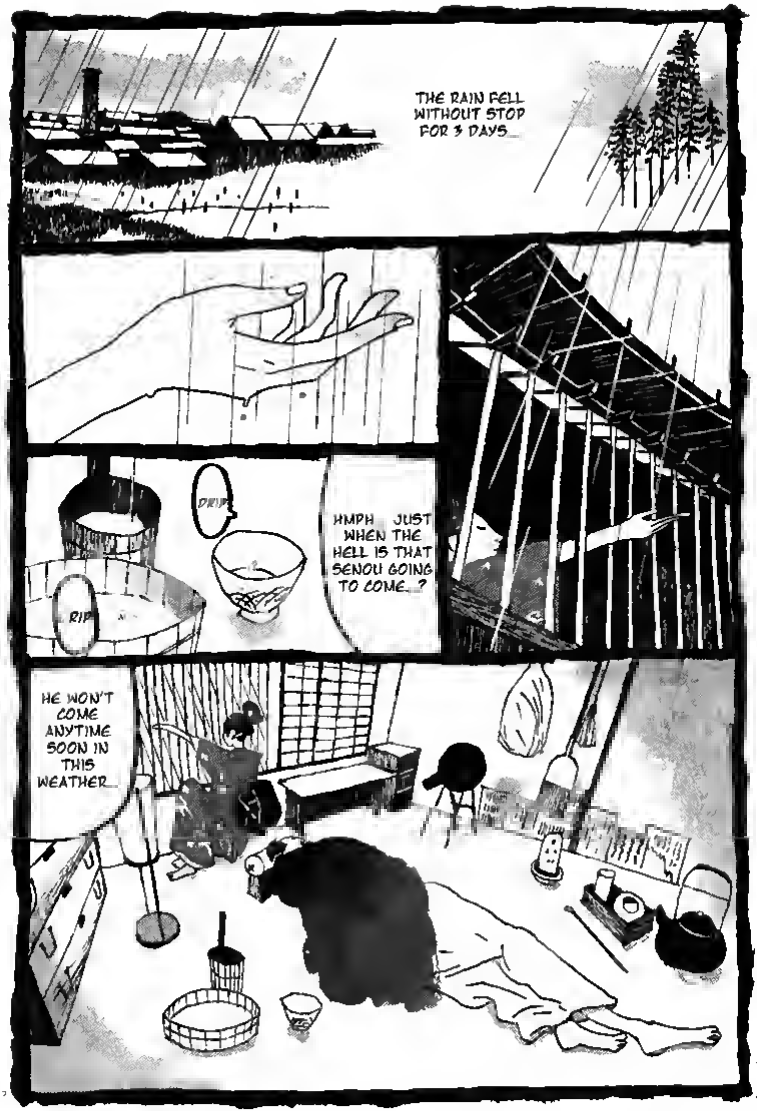
DON'T GO AROUND CAUSING OTHERS TROUBLE JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE DRUNK YOU HEAR
E HEAR YOU
A HIT!

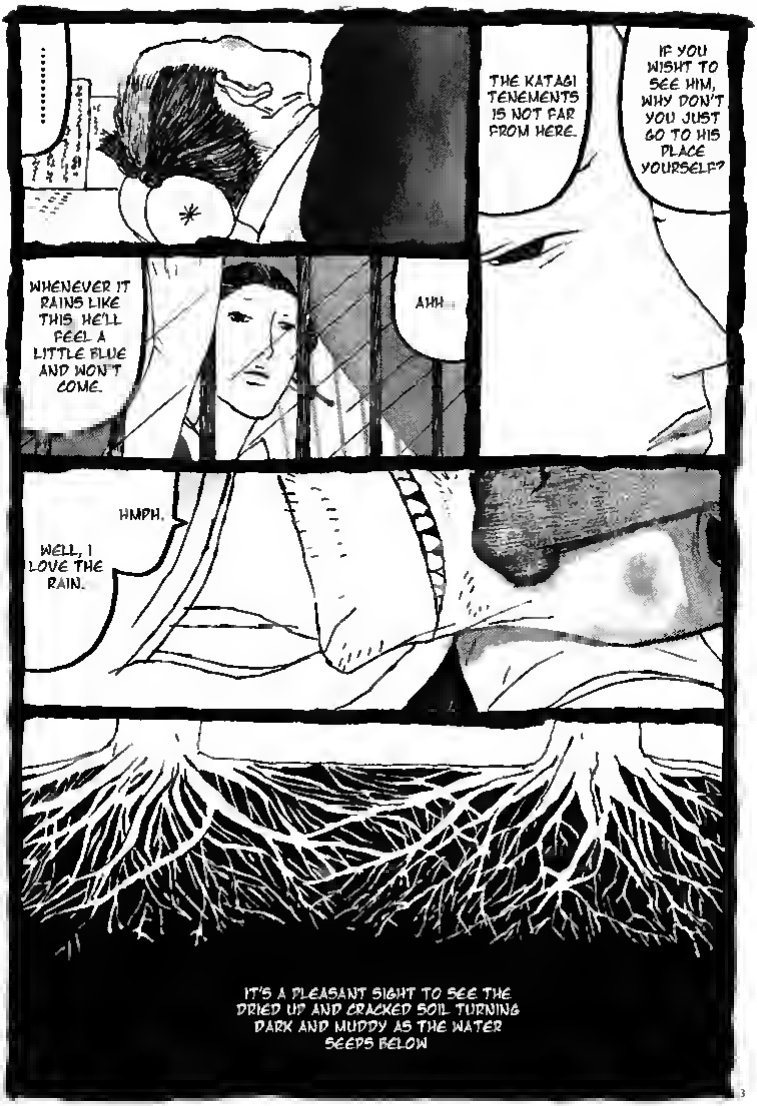
GAHAHA! A HIT, A HIT! HAHAHA!!
HA
HA
HA
HA
A HIT!


CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
THIS DOG IS SAYING THE SAME THING TOO, BOSS...
BLOW
THAT HE'S GLAD TO BE ALIVE...

TRANSLATED BY HOX

RAIN
CHAPTER 27
◎杨弓
糸塵屋


THE RAIN FELL WITHOUT STOP FOR 3 DAYS...
DRIP
RIP
HMPH... JUST WHEN THE HELL IS THAT SENOU GOING TO COME...?
HE WON'T COME ANYTIME SOON IN THIS WEATHER...


IF YOU WISHT TO SEE HIM, WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO TO HIS PLACE YOURSELF?
THE KATAGI TENEMENTS IS NOT FAR FROM HERE.
AHH...
WHENEVER IT RAINS LIKE THIS HE'LL FEEL A LITTLE BLUE AND WON'T COME.
HMPH.
WELL, I LOVE THE RAIN.
IT'S A PLEASANT SIGHT TO SEE THE DRIED UP AND CRACKED SOIL TURNING DARK AND MUDDY AS THE WATER SEEPS BELOW

TO SEE THINGS BE REVITALIZED BY WATER...
HMM.. SPOKEN LIKE A FARMER
I AM_
WERE YOU NOT A SAMURAI?
.....

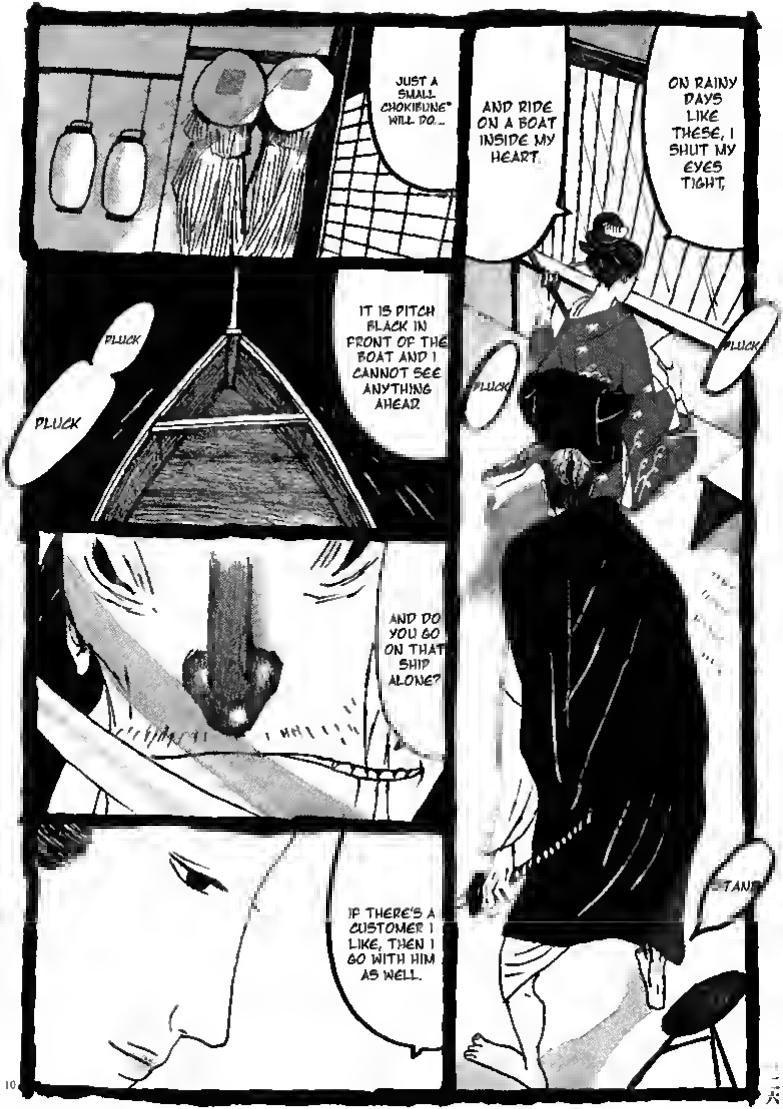
OF COURSE, OF COURSE
I AM A SAMURAI!
SO KUNIFUSA HAS BEEN SOLD AWAY...
I SEE...

I HAVE ALREADY REPEATEDLY WARNED YOU OF THIS AND WAITED A LONG ENOUGH TIME...
PLEASE DO NOT RESENT ME, SIR
I MERELY WISHED TO SEE IT ONCE MORE IN THIS WORLD...
IN ANY CASE, I DO NOT EVEN HAVE THE MONEY TO BUY IT
I DO NOT RESENT YOU...
?

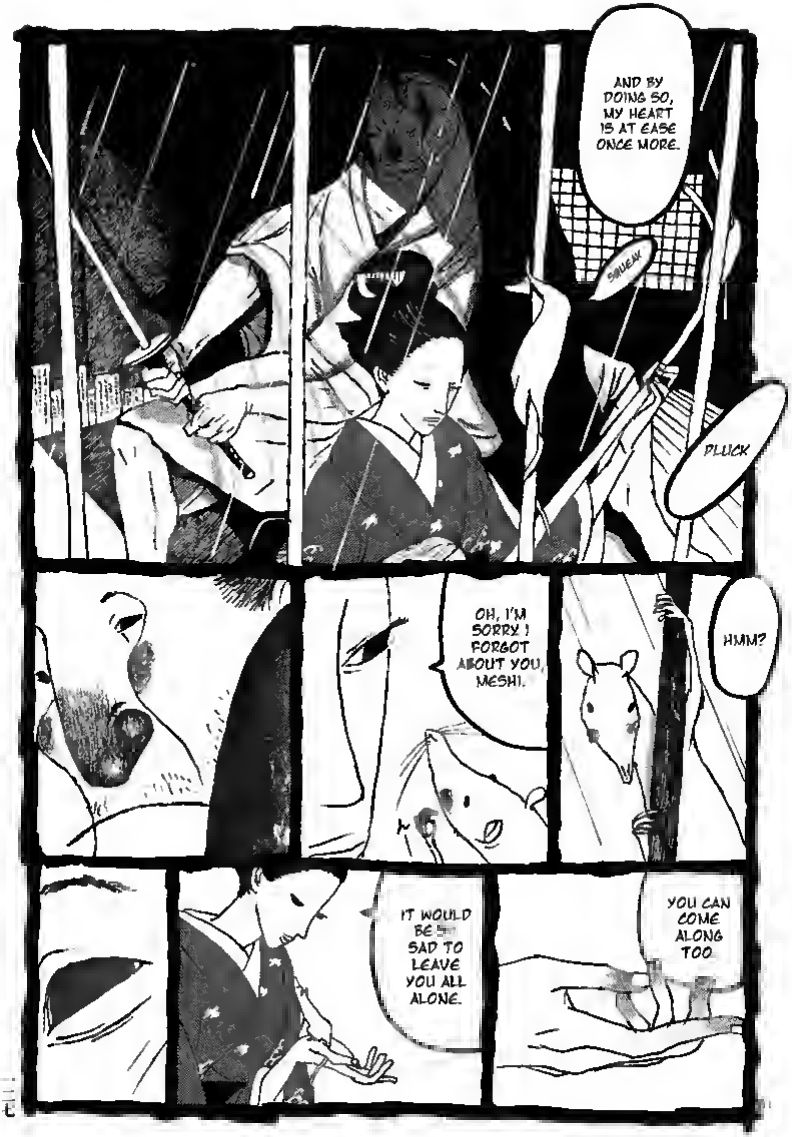
IT TASTES VERY GOOD, YOU KNOW.
I SHALL GO BRING SOME SWEET SAKE.
SLIDE
WELL, YOU MAY STAY HERE UNTIL THE RAIN STOPS IF YOU WISH.
HMM...
I WONDER JUST WHAT IT IS ABOUT THAT MAN...

WHENEVER I'M FEELING A LITTLE DOWN, I THINK OF HIM
TWEAK
DID I SAY SOMETHING BAD!?
FART
BAH. AN UNREQUITED LOVE OF SOME BITCH FROM AN ARCHERY RANGE?
WELL, WHATEVER.
HE IS THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE

HMPH! WELL, WHENEVER I SEE HIM, I BECOME SO PENT UP.
I JUST WANT TO CUT DOWN EVERYONE BY HIS SIDE
GRAB
CLING...
I WONDER WHY...
FLICK
FLICK
SLASH!!
SIGH
THE SOUND DOESN'T COME OUT TOO WELL UNDER THIS WEATHER.
FLICK


ON RAINY DAYS LIKE THESE, I SHUT MY EYES TIGHT,
AND RIDE ON A BOAT INSIDE MY HEART.
JUST A SMALL CHOKIBUNE* WILL DO...
PLUCK
PLUCK
PLUCK
PLUCK
IT IS PITCH BLACK IN FRONT OF THE BOAT AND I CANNOT SEE ANYTHING AHEAD.
AND DO YOU GO ON THAT SHIP ALONE?
IF THERE'S A CUSTOMER I LIKE, THEN I GO WITH HIM AS WELL.

*A TYPE OF JAPANESE BOAT


AND BY DOING SO, MY HEART IS AT EASE ONCE MORE.
SWEAK
PLUCK
HMM?
OH, I'M SORRY! FORGOT ABOUT YOU, MESHI.
YOU CAN COME ALONG TOO.
IT WOULD BE SAD TO LEAVE YOU ALL ALONE.

HMPH...

ONE SHALL, YOU SHALL BE CHOSEN BY A SWORD AS WELL
THERE ARE MANY WHO LOVE THEIR SWORDS, BUT FEW WHO ARE LOVED BY THEIR SWORDS
FATHER
あぁ
!?

ざーあーあー

PLUCK
PLUCK
PLUCK
PLUCK

あ
あ
あ

THERE IS NO MISTAKE. KIKUCHI IS DEFINITELY INSIDE THERE.
IS HE REALLY HERE, SADAKICHI?
YES. I SAW HIM GOING INSIDE WITH MY OWN TWO EYES.
NO, THAT WOULD BE NO GOOD.
SHOULD WE GO INSIDE PRETENDING TO BE CUSTOMERS, BOSS?
BEFORE TSUNE'S 49TH DAY AFTER DEATH*...
WE JUST NEED TO MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T ESCAPE FOR NOW.
MORE-OVER THE WEATHER IS BAD RIGHT NOW.
THOUGH I'M WORRIED FOR RITSU, GOING INSIDE WOULD BE A BAD IDEA

*IN BUDDHISM, IT IS BELIEVED THAT A SPIRIT IS REBORN AFTER 49 DAYS

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 28
THE TWO DEMONS

1 IN THE AFTERNOON
HAVE THERE BEEN ANY OTHER MOVE-MENTS?
NO, HE'S JUST EATING HIS DANGO.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
YES. HE REALLY IS JUST SITTING THERE IDLY
CHEW CHEW

THUMP
THUMP
DADAKICHI WHAT DID KAMEYAMA SAY?
HE SAID THAT HE WOULD BE [illegible]MING SOON

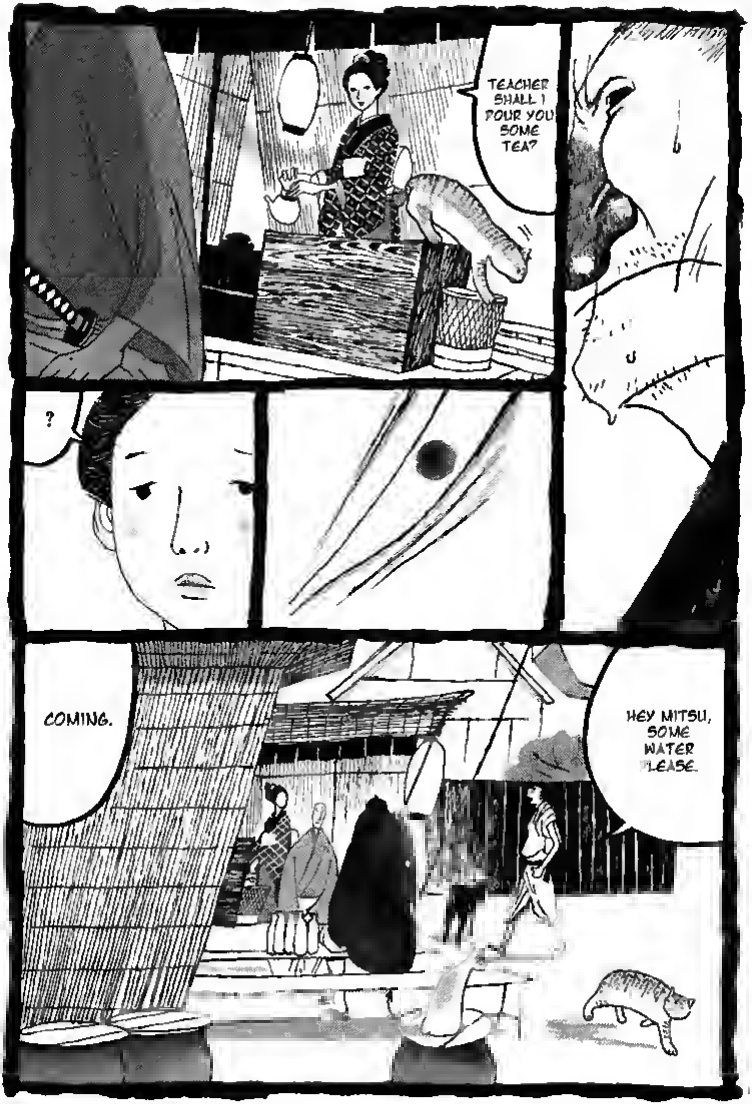
THEY JUST LOVE TO DRAG THINGS OUT IN THE NAME OF FORMAL PROCEDURES AND ALL THAT DON'T THEY!?
HMPH YOU JUST CAN'T RELY ON THE AUTHORITIES!
WE'LL ALL BE GREY-HAIRED BY THE TIME THEY ARRIVE!!
THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME...
YES,
WHAT! HE'S COMING SOON!?
WITH ONLY THIS MANY PEOPLE HERE WE CAN'T HOPE TO CATCH HIM, BOSS
HMM... IS HE EATING OR SLEEPING?
HE'S STILL EATING.
QUIET DOWN
HMM
HMM HMM HMM

STEP
HMM?
ザッ
ザッ

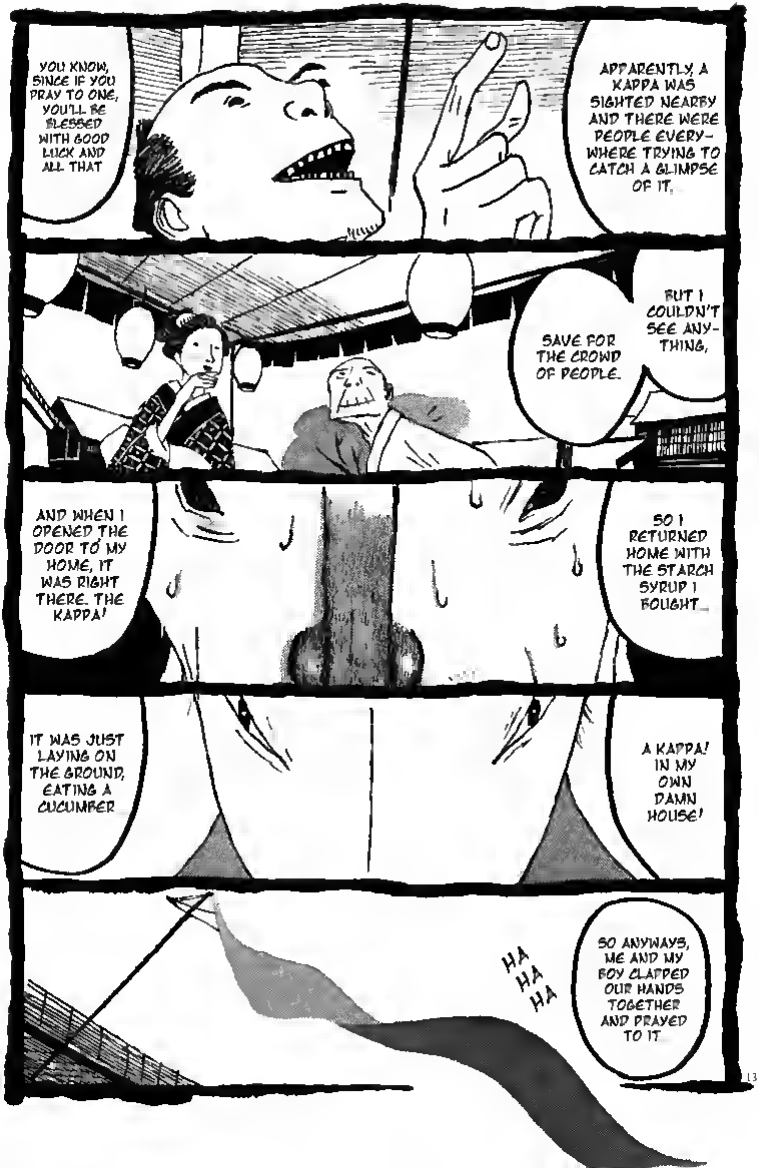
IT SURE IS QUITE HOT TODAY, ISN'T IT, MISS MITSU?
AH, GOOD DAY, TEACHER
I SAW A CROWD OF PEOPLE ON MY WAY HERE. I WONDER IF SOMETHING IS GOING ON?
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D COME TO OUR SHOP TODAY.
WELCOME, TEACHER
I'VE PREPARED YOUR DANGO ALREADY.
GRIN
WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

IT'S THE YOUNG TEACHER FROM YOUR PLACE, BOSS
I SEE...
WHY DID HE HAVE TO COME NOW OUT OF ALL TIMES...
.....
AND HE'S SITTING SO CLOSE TO HIM
OPEN
SIP

GRIP..
PANT
PANT
CLING


TEACHER SHALL I POUR YOU SOME TEA?
?
HEY MITSU, SOME WATER PLEASE.
COMING.

SURE IS HOT TODAY.
THEY'RE NOT MOVING AT ALL.
THEY'RE GOING TO DRAW THEIR SWORDS.
WHAT?
IT'D BE BEST FOR US TO GO DOWN-STAIRS RIGHT NOW.


YOU KNOW, SINCE IF YOU PRAY TO ONE, YOU'LL BE BLESSED WITH GOOD LUCK AND ALL THAT
APPARENTLY A KAPPA WAS SIGHTED NEARBY AND THERE WERE PEOPLE EVERY-WHERE TRYING TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF IT.
BUT I COULDN'T SEE ANY-THING, SAVE FOR THE CROWD OF PEOPLE.
SO I RETURNED HOME WITH THE STARCH SYRUP I BOUGHT...
AND WHEN I OPENED THE DOOR TO MY HOME, IT WAS RIGHT THERE. THE KAPPA!
A KAPPA! IN MY OWN DAMN HOUSE!
IT WAS JUST LAYING ON THE GROUND, EATING A CUCUMBER
HA HA HA
SO ANYWAYS, ME AND MY BOY CLAPPED OUR HANDS TOGETHER AND PRAYED TO IT...

HISS!
RYAA!
MM...
HA
HA
HA
THE BEST SWEET SAKE IN ALL OF JAPAN, RIGHT HERE! COME BUY SOME SWEET SAKE FOLKS!

HA
HA
HA
PADDLE
AHAHAHA!

さっ
ばっ

4 IN THE
AFTERNOON

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 29

AND THE MOUSE SQUEAKS

THE MOUNTAIN RUMBLES,

CRACK
GUH!
SWING
SLASH

UGH!
だっ
ガシッ
ぶっ
どっ
ぐしゃ
TEACHER?
?

WHAT'S WRONG TEACHER? IS THE HEAT MAKING YOU DIZZY?

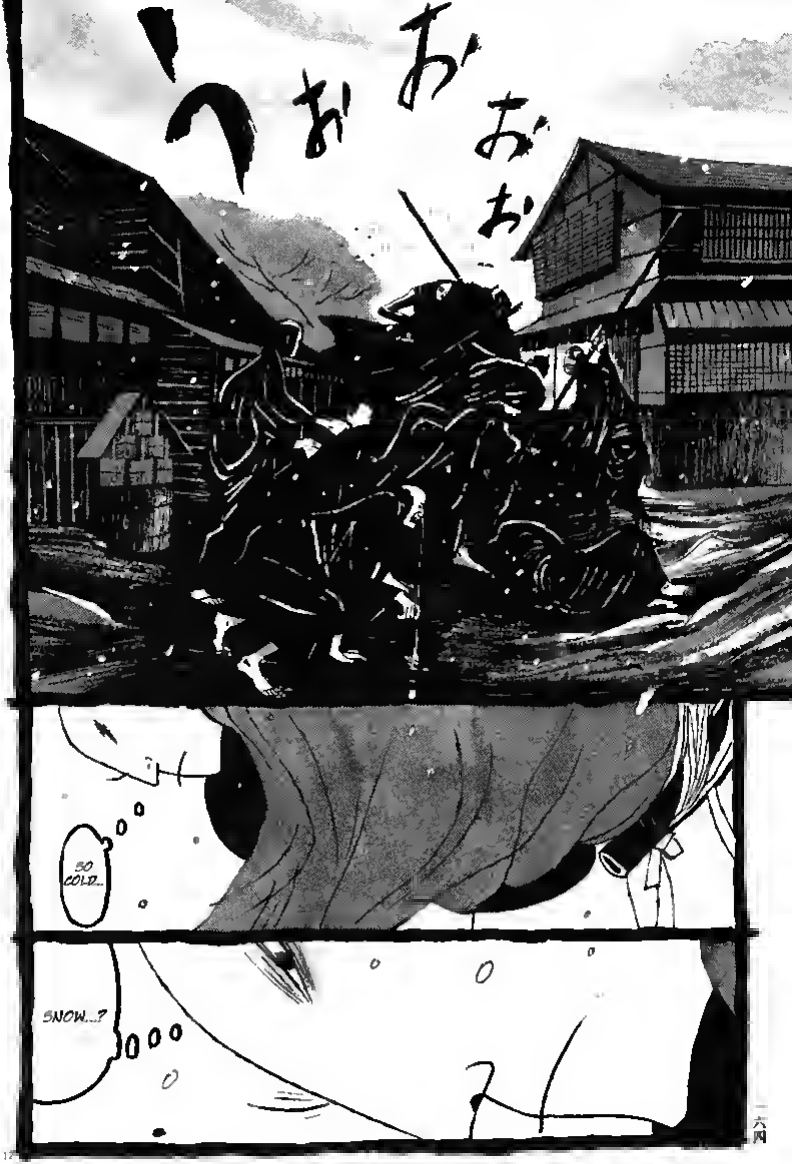
AH!
Y-YOU'RE BLEEDING, TEACHER..
.....
TEACHER!!
WHAT HAPPENED!?

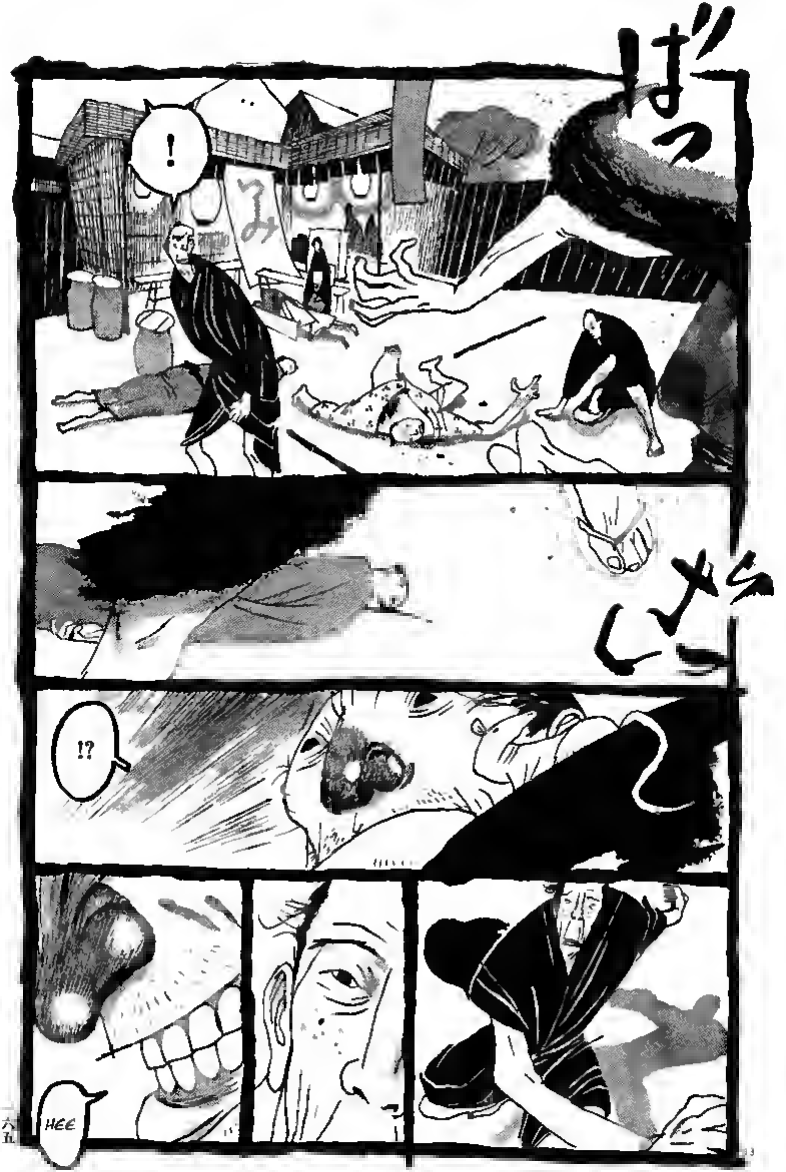
HEY!
KYAA!
JUST WHAT THE HELL IS THIS SENOU!!?
ARE YOU MAKING A FOOL OUT OF ME!!?

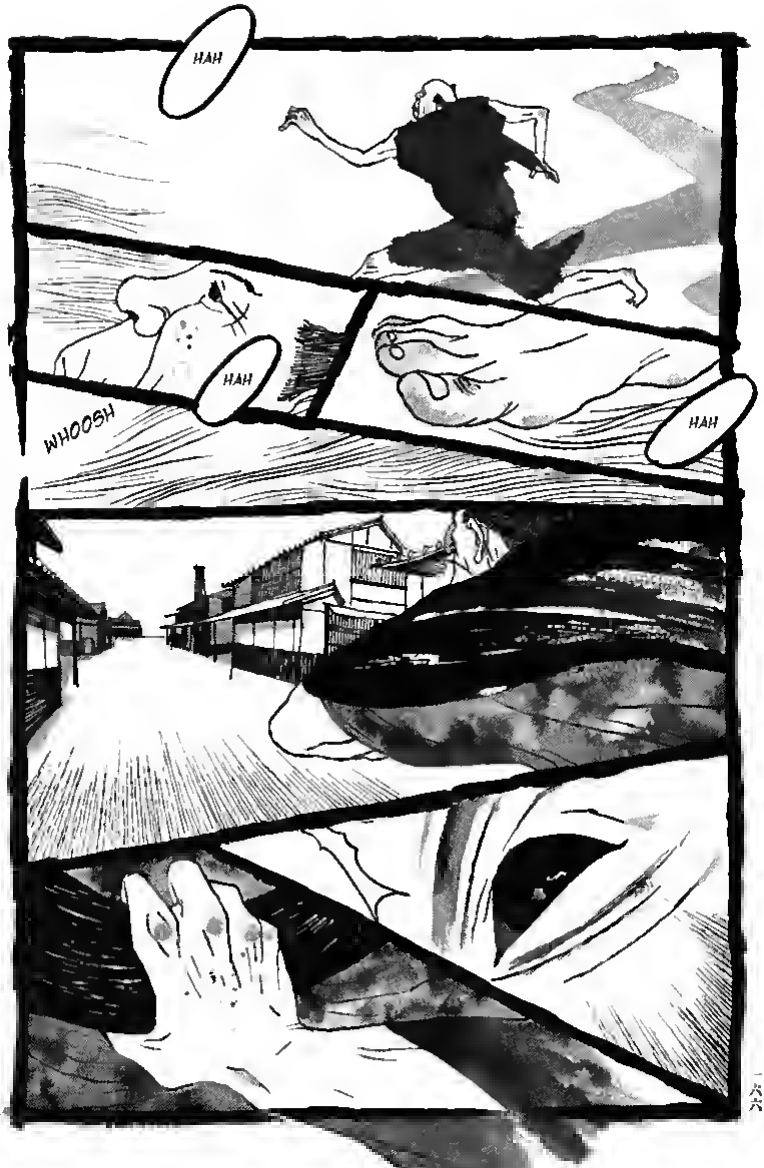
SENOU!!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA AT ALL HOW MUCH I PREPARED JUST TO FIGHT YOU!!?
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA AT ALL
THROW

BASH
CLANG
AGH...
OWW...
HM?
AGGGHHHHH!
KIKUCHI SHINNOSUKE!!

YOU ARE HEREBY ARRESTED FOR THE MURDER OF OFFICER TSUNE-GOROU!!
SHUT UP!!


おおお
SO COLD...
SNOW...?


ばっ
!
ざく
!?
HEE


HAH
HAH
HAH
WHOOSH

GUH!
SMASH
SMACK

CRACK

DAMN IT!!!
GRIP
GUH!
BOSS!
AHH...

FATHER...

STEP
STEP
A LITTLE PAST 4 IN THE AFTERNOON...
THE EDO POLICE ARRIVED AT THE SCENE
ARREST HIM!
ARGGHHH
THE INCIDENT WAS SETTLED AT AN UNPRECEDENTED SPEED BY THE MAGISTRATE.

AGHH HHH!
ARRRGGGGHHHH...
AH...

TRANSLATED BY HOX

CHAPTER 30 AFTER THE ARREST OF KIKUCHI...

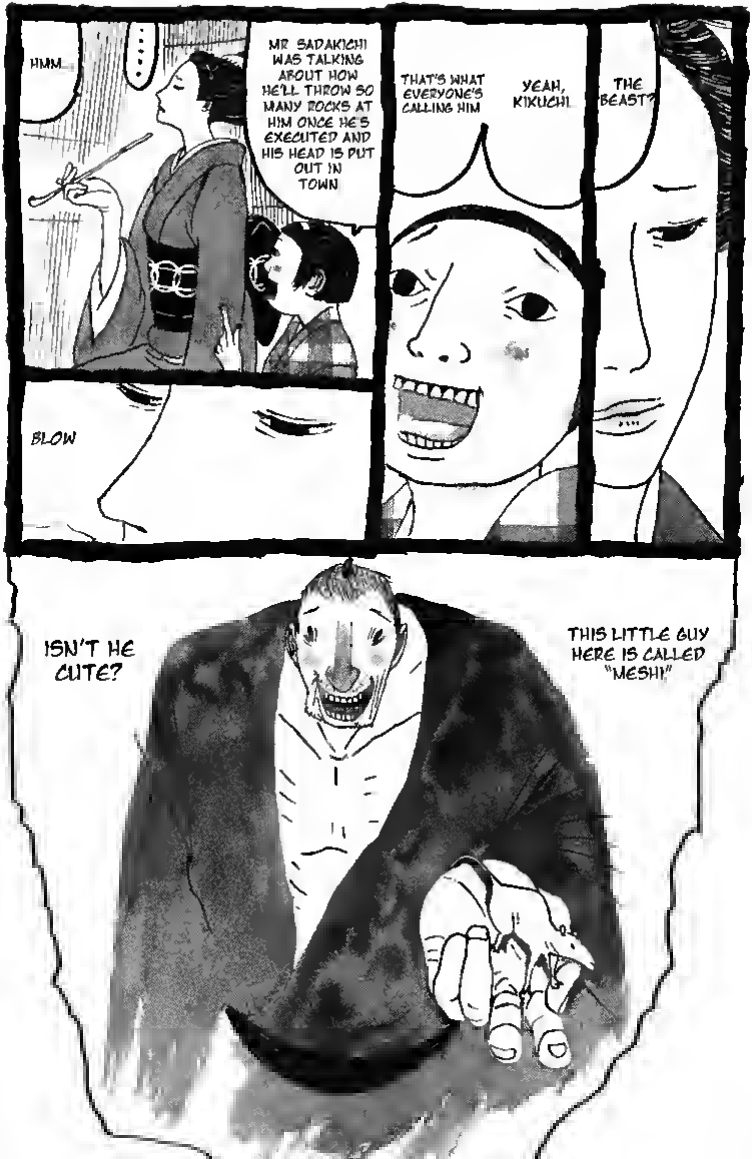
THE DEATAILS SURROUNDING KIKUCHI'S CAPTURE WAS GREATLY EXAGGERATED AND SOON KNOWN ALL OVER THE TOWN
SOME EVEN SAID THAT HE WAS A HORNED BEAST OVER 8 SHAKU IN LENGTH, WHO KILLED 30 MEN TRYING TO PUT HIM DOWN.

SENOU SOUICHIROU WAS ONLY ADDED TO THE RUMOR AS THE POOR HAPLESS RONIN WHO WAS THE FIRST VICTIM OF THE DEMON.
LEAVING THE DOCTOR IN GREAT SURPRISE.
LIKE A BEAST, YOU ARE.
HIS WOUNDS WERE TREATED AND HEALED VERY QUICKLY
WHEEZE
YOZAEMON'S CONDITION, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS VERY GRAVE FOR 4 DAYS AND NIGHTS, HIS CONSCIOUSNESS WAVERED BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

HIS FOLLWERS STAYED BY HIS SIDE FOR THOSE 4 DAYS, NEVER LEAVING HIS SIDE UNTIL HE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS.
AND SO, THE DAYS GRADUALLY RETURNED TO NORMAL ONCE MORE...
EVEN THE OTHER TENANTS WHO LOVED TO GOSSIP DID NOT DARE SPEAK OF HIS CONDITION
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO WAIT FOR HIM?

HMRH,
HE'S PROBABLY LYING DEAD SOMEWHERE.
SHUT UP! JUST GO AWAY!
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT KID.
WHAT!
HA...
YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME. YOU'D BE BETTER OFF TRYING TO SCARE A RADISH.

I SEE.
SO SOU IS ALL BETTER NOW...
YUP HIS WOUNDS ALL CLOSED UP AND HE'S NOW THE SAME AS ALWAYS.
MUNCH MUNCH
EVERYONE WAS REAL WORRIED ABOUT THE LANDLORD THOUGH. HE WAS BEATEN VERY BAD BY THE BEAST.
HE ONLY WOKE UP JUST YESTERDAY.
FOR Z PEOPLE?
YES.

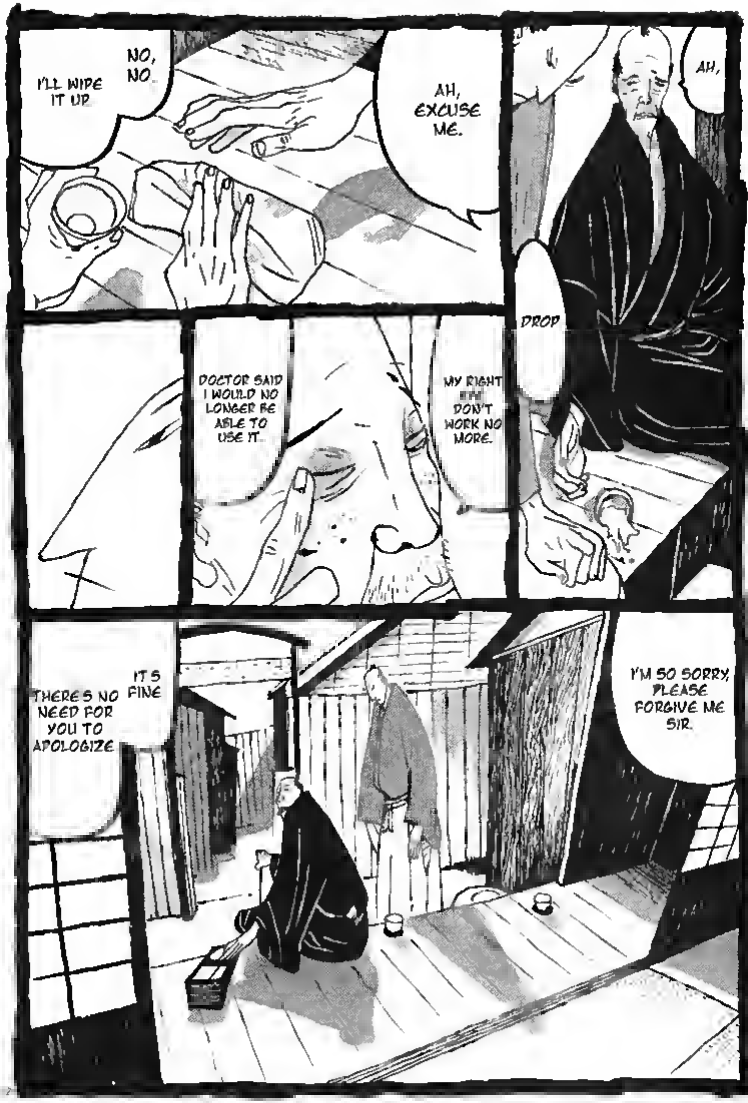

HMM...
MR. SADAKICHI WAS TALKING ABOUT HOW HE'LL THROW SO MANY ROCKS AT HIM ONCE HE'S EXECUTED AND HIS HEAD IS PUT OUT IN TOWN
BLOW
THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE'S CALLING HIM
YEAH, KIKUCHI.
THE BEAST?
ISN'T HE CUTE?
THIS LITTLE GUY HERE IS CALLED "MESHI."

TAP
SLIDE SLIDE
COME HERE, YOSHIBOU. I'LL GIVE YOU SOME MANJU TOO
HAHA, YOSHIBOU REALLY DOES HAVE A GOOD NOSE FOR FINDING FOOD

DAMN IT...
OWWW...
SHIT...
WHERE'RE THE KIDS?
HMM
JUST LIKE HOW YOU LEFT
THEY'VE ALL LEFT THEIR HOME NOW
WELL WE CAN ALWAYS MAKE MORE

WALKING THROUGH THIS FLUFFY FLOWER GARDEN...
I WAS...
WHEN THERE WAS THIS HUGE MASS OF BLOB LOOKING LIKE SOME KIND OF RICECAKE BLOCKING MY WAY
I TRIED TO WALK AROUND IT, BUT IT KEPT BLOCKING MY WAY
SWOOSH

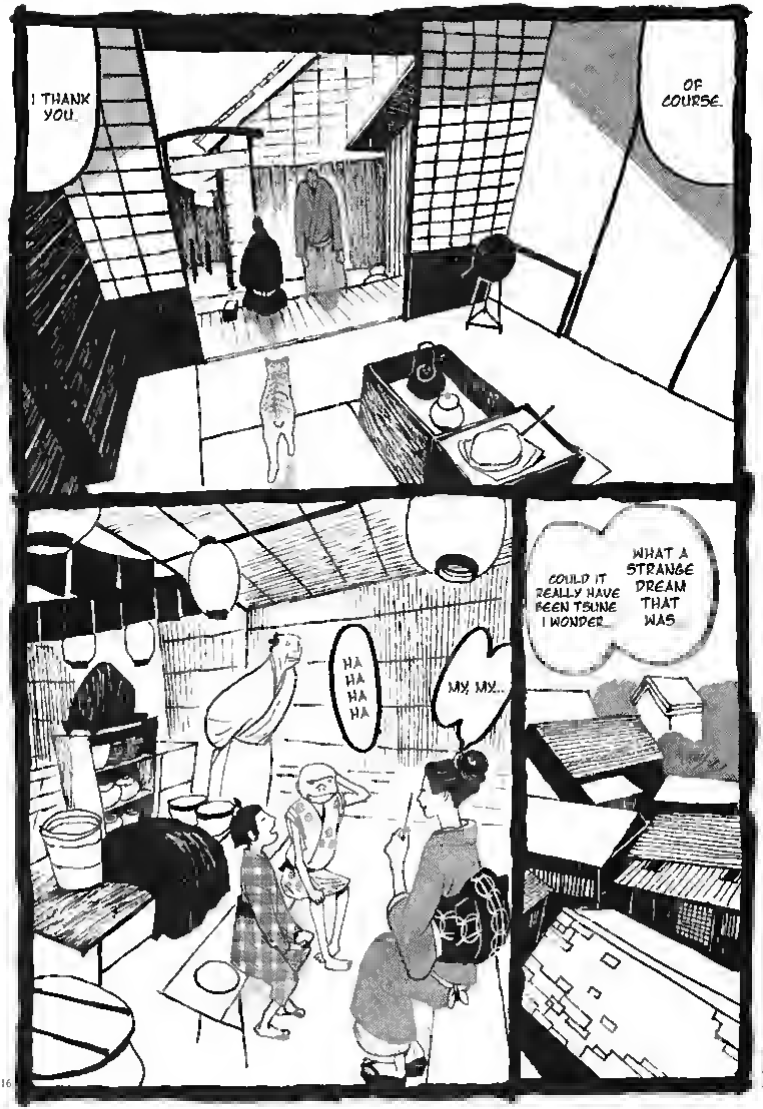
IN ANY CASE, I ENDED UP GIVING UP AND GOING BACK THE WAY I CAME FROM.
HE RATHER LOOKED LIKE TSUNE TO ME...
POKE
AND WHILE I WAS WALKING BACK, IT KEPT WAVING ITS... HAND, FOOT, OR WHATEVER IT WAS. HE KEPT WAVING BACK AT ME.
THAT'S THE DREAM I HAD BEFORE REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS...
I THINK THAT REALLY MAY HAVE BEEN TSUNE.


NO, NO.
I'LL WIPE IT UP.
AH, EXCUSE ME.
AH,
DROP
MY RIGHT ARM DON'T WORK NO MORE.
DOCTOR SAID I WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO USE IT.
I'M SO SORRY, PLEASE FORGIVE ME SIR.
IT'S FINE
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO APOLOGIZE

BOTH OF YOUR SWORD-DRAWING TECH-NIQUES...
BLOW
BUT IT WAS A TERRIFIC SIGHT TO BEHOLD...
IT WAS AS IF I COULD REALLY SEE BOTH YOU AND YOUR OPPONENT'S SOULS FLICKERING BEFORE MY OWN EYES

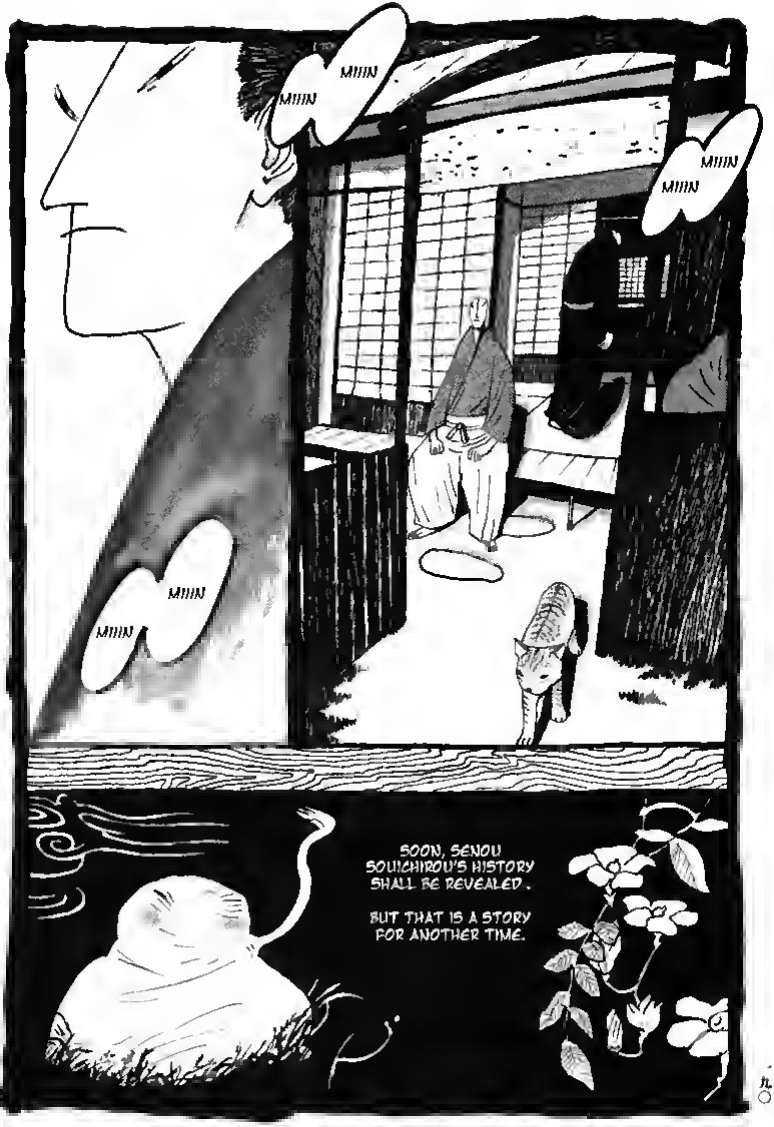
I WAS PREPARED TO DIE.
YOU SHOWED ME SOME-THING VERY INTER-ESTING.
.....
THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR TSUNE'S DEATH MUST BE PUNISHED PROPERLY
WELL.... IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE GOING OUT NOW, SENOU...
ふう
KIKUCHI IS A RETAINER OF A MAN MY FATHER SERVED UNDER. KIKUCHI IS MOST LIKELY NOTHING BUT AN ASSASSIN SENT AFTER ME...

I'VE BEEN EATING NOTHING BUT RICE GRUEL AND MY STOMACH IS QUITE TIRED OF IT
WON'T YOU GO TO MITSU'S SHOP AND BRING BACK 5 DANGO STICKS FOR ME?


I THANK YOU.
OF COURSE.
WHAT A STRANGE DREAM THAT WAS
COULD IT REALLY HAVE BEEN TSUNE I WONDER...
MY, MY...
HA HA HA HA

八九

*SOUND OF CICADAS CRYING



TRANSLATED BY HOX

TO BE CONTINUED IN
THE 4TH VOLUME...

地から湧いたか、天からふったか、
ある日、江戸はかたぎ長屋に住み着いた素浪人。
その名を瀬能宗一郎。
腰の銘刀、國房を質にいれるや、
手挟んだのはなんと竹光。

一の子分は隣の勘吉。
友と頼むは漢、御輿大三朗。
契る妾は、矢場のお勝。

差配の与左衛門、目明かし恒吾郎、
槍持ち源次らを引き連れ、道場に、寺子屋に、
辻斬り退治に八面六臂の大活躍。
そんな宗一郎をつけ狙うは
凶剣士、木久地真之介。宣して曰く

「何れ、お前を斬る。」

宗さんの笑顔が人の輪を広げ、
宗さんの剣が魔を呼び込む。
好漢、瀬能宗一郎、何を起こすか、起こさぬか。

竹光侍

His sword must be bamboo!

松本大洋＋永福一成

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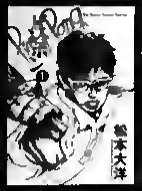

世界はヒーローを待っている!!
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竹光侍 三

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